

Coping With Anxiety

Begin with the next few minutes

Anxiety can arise with stress, uncertainty, loss, or a difficult experience. It can affect your thoughts and your body, even when there is no immediate threat. You are not alone, and support is available. Try one of these steps at your own pace.

1 Orient to the present

Look around and notice where you are. If it is safe to do so, pause in a quieter place and feel the support of the chair or floor.

- Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, and 1 you taste.
- Adapt the exercise to your senses and surroundings. You can simply describe a familiar object or name three colors.

2 Let your breathing stay comfortable

Breathe in and out gently, without forcing a deep breath or holding it. If counting helps, choose a short, easy count for each breath. Your breathing does not need to match a particular number.

If focusing on breathing increases discomfort or makes you lightheaded, return to your usual breathing and focus on something you can see or touch.

3 Respond kindly to anxious thoughts

- Notice the thought: 'I am having the thought that I cannot cope.' A thought is not the same as a fact.
- Ask, 'What do I know right now? What would I say to someone I care about?'
- Try a balanced phrase: 'This is difficult, and I can ask for help with the next step.'
- Write down a worry. If there is an action you can take, make it small and specific.

Give yourself permission to pause

A short walk, gentle stretch, quiet music, or a familiar task may help. Choose what feels supportive; you do not have to make every feeling disappear before asking for care.

Build support around you

You do not have to carry anxiety by yourself. Small routines and caring relationships can support you alongside professional care when it is needed.

4 Care for daily needs

- Make room for regular meals, water, and a workable sleep routine.
- Choose movement that fits your energy and abilities.
- Notice whether caffeine worsens your anxiety; consider reducing it.
- Keep one manageable activity that gives you meaning or enjoyment.

5 Connect with people and hope

'Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.' - 1 Peter 5:7

You are welcome to bring your questions and struggles. Seeking professional help can be part of caring for yourself.

- Tell a trusted person what is happening. Be specific: 'Could you sit with me?' or 'Could you help me find a counselor?'
- If faith is a source of comfort, make room for prayer, scripture, quiet reflection, or time with your faith community.
- A chaplain can listen, offer spiritual care, and help you find further support.

6 Know when to seek more help

Contact a health care professional if anxiety persists, gets worse, disrupts daily life, or leads you to avoid important activities. You can ask for help before it becomes overwhelming. A clinician can discuss treatment options with you.

Do not assume new or severe physical symptoms are anxiety. Seek medical advice; call 911 for a medical emergency or immediate danger.

Support right now United States

For emotional distress, thoughts of suicide, or a mental health crisis, call or text 988, or visit 988lifeline.org. Free, confidential support is available 24/7.

For immediate danger or a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

My next step

Someone I can contact: _____

One thing I can ask for: _____

Sources [NIMH: I'm So Stressed Out!](#) | [NIMH: Help for Mental Illnesses](#) | [NHS: Breathing Exercises for Stress](#) | [NHS: Mindfulness](#) | [NHS inform: Grounding Exercises](#) | [NHS: Panic Disorder](#)