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9 Proven Strategies for Managing Anxiety

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Virtually everyone feels anxious from time to time, but it's more pronounced and problematic for some people than others. People who have high-stress jobs, financial difficulties, relationship troubles, or health concerns all tend to have above-average anxiety levels.

While there's no way to eliminate anxiety altogether (a little anxiety can actually be good for you), there are plenty of ways to keep your anxiety levels to a minimum. In this post, we'll run through some of the most effective strategies for managing the frequency and intensity of your anxiety. All of these strategies will work both to combat anxiety while it's occurring and as a preventative measure.

Work It Out

Exercise can do wonders for combating stress and anxiety, functioning as an effective way to release the anxious feelings you've been carrying inside. It can also do wonders for your mood — exercise releases feel-good chemicals — and makes it more likely that you'll do other good-for-you habits that help to keep stress under control, like eating healthy meals.

Virtually any type of exercise can be good for reducing anxiety, including going for a long walk. For the best results, however, ramp up the intensity. You'll feel much better if you spend thirty minutes on a bike machine with the resistance level set high. When in doubt, sweat it out!

Avoid Alcohol, Coffee, and Nicotine

Substances like alcohol, coffee, and nicotine can *seem* like they're helping with anxiety, but in fact, they're usually making it worse. Let's take alcohol as an example. While a couple of drinks can have a short-term relaxing effect that reduces feelings of anxiety, once the effect wears off, the brain swings the other way. You'll likely feel even more anxious than you did before you consumed alcohol. Alcohol, as well as smoking and caffeine, can also elevate the heart rate and blood pressure, essentially mimicking what an anxiety attack can feel like.

The bottom line? If you're prone to feeling anxious, then it's best to leave these substances alone, especially when you're going through a stressful period.

Understand Your Anxiety Triggers

Not all people find all situations equally anxiety-inducing. The things, places, people, and activities

that prompt a bout of anxiety in you will be specific to your personality. Understanding what those things are can be extremely helpful for keeping your anxiety under control. It's not necessarily about avoiding anything that might provoke anxiety, but more about being aware of how your body might react and taking proactive steps to keep things under control.

For example, if you get anxious when you have to give a presentation, you may place a greater priority on self-care and practicing anti-anxiety activities in the days leading up to the presentation. This awareness can help prevent you from becoming blindsided by anxiety, which can often make the attack feel worse.

Write It Out

You can think of anxiety as a ball of energy that needs to be released. Exercise, mentioned above, is a good way to get it out, as is writing. It's often easier to make sense of our worries and concerns when we can see them written down on a page, since it helps to give us some perspective on the situation.

Keeping a daily journal — and writing in it each morning/when you feel anxious — can be a terrific way to stop your mind from spiralling into worry and anxiety. Most people find that they feel noticeably better by the time they've completed their journal entry.

Talk With a Professional

As we've already seen, there are plenty of things that individuals with anxiety can do by themselves to get a grip on their anxiety. However, it's also worth remembering that there are instances when it's better to seek professional help. If your anxiety is interfering with your relationships, work, or ability to enjoy life to the fullest, then consider **anxiety counseling**. In some cases, even people with mild anxiety should speak to a professional, since it'll help to get a grip on the condition before it worsens. A trained therapist will work with you to identify triggers, teach coping mechanisms, and help you build a framework that ensures anxiety doesn't dictate your future.

Meditation and Breathwork

Meditation and breathwork can both do wonders for reducing feelings of anxiety, especially breathwork. While mindfulness can have long-term benefits, those usually come after months of practice. Breathwork can have an instant impact, helping to put you in a calm and more relaxed state in as little as fifteen minutes. Look at incorporating both meditation and breathwork into your morning schedule, and you should find that you start the day from a calm state — and that you're much better equipped to take stressful moments in your stride through the day.

Spend Time In Nature

Looking for a quick, relatively easy, and fun way to lower your anxiety levels? Consider spending time in nature. This strategy is often overlooked, but studies support the claim that it can have a significantly positive impact on feelings of anxiety and depression. Even spending fifteen minutes in a green environment can have an effect, but for the best results, try to **spend two hours per week in the great outdoors**.

Improve Your Sleep

Poor sleep can worsen symptoms of anxiety. Alas, anxiety can also make it more difficult to sleep. Taking a proactive approach to improving your sleep routine can help you get things under control. Avoiding screens, meditating, and creating a calming sleep environment can all help.

Take Yourself Out of Your Bubble

Finally, remember the power that can come from changing your environment. It's all too easy to get sucked into an anxiety-thinking loop, at which point our mind is racing in directions that we'd rather avoid. Physically removing yourself from that environment (say, your bedroom/living room) and doing something else is an effective way to wrestle back control. Go for a **bike ride**, meet some friends for a catch-up, or pay a visit to a museum. Anything that shifts your mind and focus somewhere else will do the trick.

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