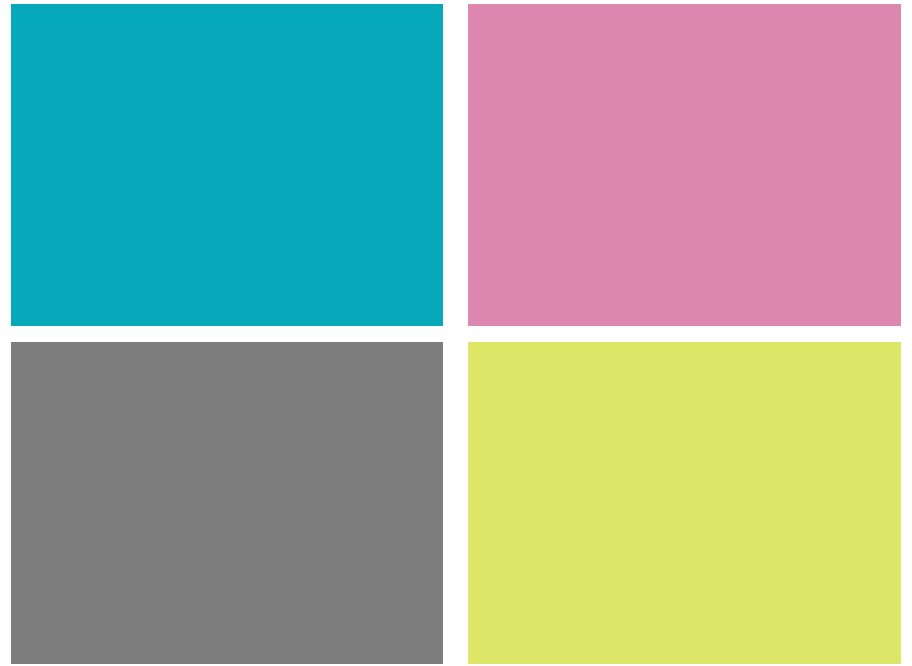




be well

Betterment
Counseling Services



Anxiety

Identifying, Managing, and Resolving Anxiety

Anxiety Can Be a Good Thing!

It is rooted in our body's natural response to stress (helpful!)

It may not be enjoyable but it can help us to avoid unsafe situations and will motivate you to make changes when necessary.

When out of control it can lead to many psychological and physical effects, and can be debilitating for the sufferer.

Anxiety Self Test *Psychological Symptoms*

If you can identify with the below symptoms, chances are that you suffer from anxiety.

- Persistent & Disproportionate Feelings of Worry
- Restlessness / Difficulty Relaxing
- Overthinking / Overanalyzing Plans, Solutions, or Outcomes
- Predicting Worse-Case Scenarios
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Indecisiveness / Fear of Making the Wrong Decision

More than 18% of adults in America are affected each year.

Women are twice as likely to be afflicted by anxiety disorders than men.

Where does Anxiety Come From?

Throughout human history, our ancestors had to deal with intense survival situations. Our body chemistries evolved to manage the stress in fight / flight / freeze situations (avoiding predators, tribal wars, etc.)

Now we enjoy a generally safer existence in society, but with a lot of extra stimuli. Those responses to fear are still biologically in us and sometimes get out of control.





Physical Symptoms of Anxiety Disorder

When anxiety is at its worst, it can have a profound effect on your physical well-being.

Symptoms include:

- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Trouble sleeping
- ✓ Muscle tension or muscle aches
- ✓ Trembling, feeling twitchy
- ✓ Nervousness or being easily startled
- ✓ Sweating
- ✓ Nausea, diarrhea or irritable bowel syndrome
- ✓ Irritability

5 Major Types of Anxiety

Anxiety Disorder can express itself in many ways, here are the five most common.



1. General Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
2. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
3. Panic Disorder
4. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
5. Social Phobia (or Social Anxiety Disorder)

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

5 Major Types of Anxiety

Symptoms

- Persistent and Excessive Worry / Constant Anxiety
- Restlessness / Trouble Relaxing
- Easily Fatigued
- Irritability
- Muscle Tension
- Sleep Disturbances

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is characterized by extreme worry or nervousness related to health, money, familial life, or other daily stressors. Daily tasks become overwhelming and difficulty focusing is a strong characteristic.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

5 Major Types of Anxiety

Obsessive Symptoms

- Unwanted and intrusive thoughts involving sex, religion, self harm, or other taboos.
- Fear of germs, contamination, etc.
- Aggressive thoughts toward self or others
- Need to have objects placed in a particular way

Compulsive Symptoms

- Need to repeatedly check on or arrange things in a particular way
- Compulsive counting of steps, repetitions
- Excessive cleaning / hand washing / bathing
- Unbearable need to have things in particular order

“Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a common, chronic and long-lasting disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts (*obsessions*) and behaviors (*compulsions*) that he or she feels the urge to repeat over and over.”

-National Institute of Mental Health

Panic Disorder

5 Major Types of Anxiety

A panic attack is characterized by the sudden onset of uncontrollable and paralyzing fear.

Panic Attack Symptoms (4 or more)

- Sweating
- Difficulty Breathing
- Trembling or Shaking
- Chest Pain / Tightness in Chest
- Fearful Thoughts (*Dying, Losing Control, Going Insane*)
- Nausea / Stomach Upset
- Feelings of Detachment / Surreal Existence
- Choking Feeling / Lump in Throat
- Chills or Hot Flashes

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

5 Major Types of Anxiety

“Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.”

- The Mayo Clinic

Symptoms

- Intrusive Memories (*flashbacks, recalls, dreams, nightmares*)
- Avoidance of places or things that remind sufferer of the traumatic event
- Negative Mood Changes (*depression, hopelessness, apathy, detachment, difficulty maintaining close relationships*)
- Physical / Emotional Reaction Changes (*being on-guard, trouble sleeping / concentrating, irritability, guilt / shame, easily startled / frightened*)

Social Phobia (or Social Anxiety Disorder)

5 Major Types of Anxiety

Symptoms

- Fear of Social Situations
- Anxiety of Being Negatively Judged / Evaluated
- Pervasive Shyness
- Easily Embarrassed
- Insecurity / Feeling Out of Place

Sufferers of Social Anxiety Disorder experience an “intense anxiety or fear of being judged, negatively evaluated, or rejected in a social or performance situation.”

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America

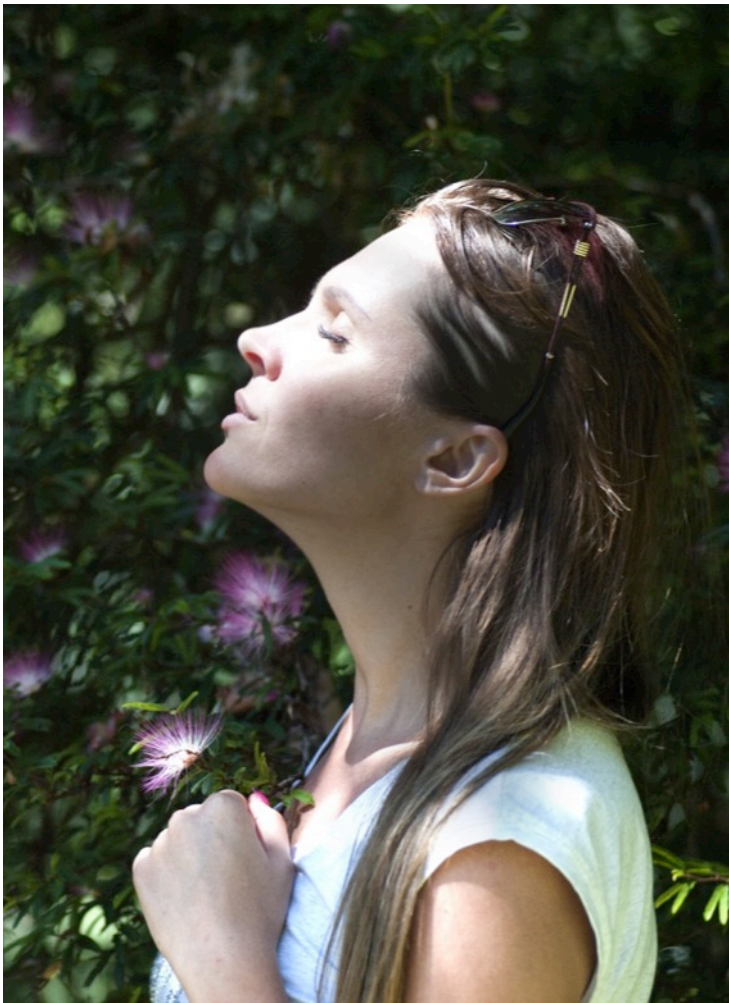
Take Control of Anxiety

Once aware of anxiety you can start to learn how to accept it for what it is and then take control back.

Don't be defined by your anxiety - use it as a measure of your success

Let's explore some things you can do to help with the various kinds of anxiety...





Breathing

Sufferers of anxiety tend to have affected breathing patterns, including shallow or monitored breath patterns, or hyperventilation. Taking a moment to focus on your breath can help “reset” symptoms and give a calming effect.

Try it!

Breathe in through your nose slowly and “inflate” your belly, focusing on posture (straight back, hips tucked forward). Exhale slowly and with intention, counting if that helps. Repeat for as long as desired.



Yoga

Practicing yoga has been found in studies to reduce symptoms of anxiety and relieve stress.

Seth J. Gillihan Ph.D. explores the effects of yoga on anxiety in his Psychology Today article [“7 Ways Yoga Lowers Stress & Anxiety.”](#) To summarize, practicing Yoga:

1. Lowers Tension
2. Regulates Breath
3. Increases Bodily Awareness
4. Interrupts Worry Cycles
5. Demonstrates Self Compassion
6. Fosters Self Acceptance
7. Trains Practitioner to Accept Discomfort



Exercise

Exercise and physical activity produces chemical endorphins in the body. These act as a natural painkiller, promote better sleep, and in turn, reduce stress.

Get Your Heart Pumping Take a Walk, Ride your Bike, Dance or Swim once per day for 30 minutes.

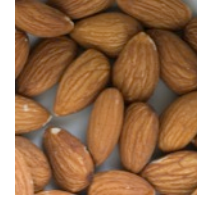
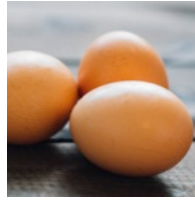
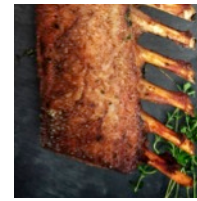
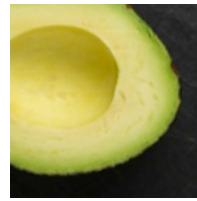
Lift Weights Strength training can be a great way to set and achieve attainable goals which is great for the body and mind.

Partner Up Find someone to work out with you to make it more fun!

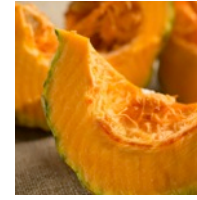
Nutrition

Eat well to feel well. A balanced diet is an imperative contributing factor to maintaining a balanced mind.

Foods rich in **Magnesium**, **Zinc**, **Omega 3 Fatty Acids**, and **B Vitamins** are known to be most effective inhibitors of anxiety and depression.



NUTRIENT	FOOD SOURCE
Magnesium	Cooked Greens (Spinach, Swiss Chard), Dark Chocolate, Pumpkin Seeds (Dried), Almonds, Black Beans, Avocado, Dried Figs, Yogurt / Kefir, Banana
Zinc	Lamb, Oysters, Pumpkin Seeds, Liver, Beef, Egg Yolks, Chickpeas, Cocoa Powder, Kefir / Yogurt, Cashews, Spinach
Omega 3	Atlantic Mackerel, Salmon Fish Oil, Chia Seeds, Flax Seeds, Hemp Seeds, Walnut, Winter Squash
B Vitamins	Beef Liver, Sardines, Lamb, Wild-Caught Salmon, Nutritional Yeast, Feta Cheese, Grass Fed Beef, Cottage Cheese, Eggs



Source: [draxe.com](https://www.draxe.com)



Other Relaxation Techniques and Resources

Progressive Relaxation

A technique to strengthen and relax each body part. *Here's a guided method via You Tube:*

[LINK](#)

Meditation

The practice of calming the mind and taking time to “observe” thoughts rather than being carried away by them as usual. There are many methods, apps, videos, and reading materials available in stores and online for more information on how to effectively meditate.

Useful Apps

Headspace – <http://headspace.com>

Calm – <http://calm.com>

Insight Timer – <http://insighttimer.com>



Therapy

When you participate in therapy, you get to drop the pretensions.

You can be vulnerable and explore the fears and tough feelings in a safe environment.

A therapist can help you explore any underlying themes and patterns that are causing the anxiety and help reframe and create new thought patterns and coping skills.



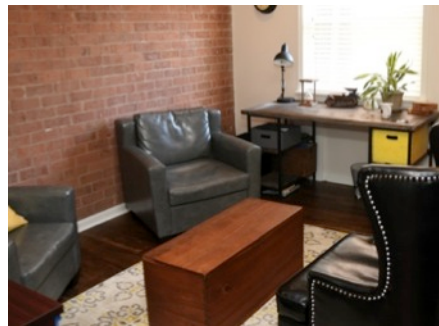
Medication

Medication can help to alleviate anxiety symptoms.

For information on the different medications that are helpful you can head over to [Everyday Health](#).

Your general practitioner can also help point you in the right direction.

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