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Take Control of Your Anxiety

5 Steps to Lower Your Anxiety

Foods to Calm and Lower Anxiety

What It Is Like to Live With Anxiety

How to Overcome Social Anxiety Disorder

A 60 Second Solution to Panic Attacks...

Breathing Your Way Out of Anxiety

How to Reduce Anxiety and Stress with Meditation

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Letter from the editor

Do you get anxious when you are talking to someone or preparing for a presentation? Do you feel stress, a lack of control and not sure how to cope? Anxiety can wreak havoc on your self-image, freeze productivity and cause problems in your relationships and daily life.

It paralyzes you, inciting panic and forcing your focus on a flurry of negative, doom-filled thoughts. It becomes a cycle of thoughts, panic and anxiety. Short fuses, excessive anger and panic are a result of those who feel anxious without any cause.

It is time for some anti-anxiety steps to calm your mind. This issue of Home Cures That Work provides actions steps to remedy anxiety.

Anxiety disorders are common in the U.S. and affects millions of people. Sadly, people rarely seek professional help to cure their anxiety. But it is actually one of the most manageable mental conditions. Thanks to their success, natural remedies are helping people to cure anxiety and panic attacks. [Dr. Saunders provides some of the most commonly used natural treatments.](#)

How often do you have to deal with anxiety in your everyday life? If you find yourself worrying too much or getting caught into non-stopping irrational thoughts or even feeling nausea, chest pain and heart palpitations [then this article is for you.](#)

A healthy and balanced lifestyle helps a lot in controlling and reducing anxiety attacks. Exercise is an effective treatment for anxiety as it promotes endorphin production in the body that serves as a natural relaxant. [Engaging in these aerobic exercises may also be particularly calming.](#)

Similarly to the way certain foods have been shown to reduce stress, a number of foods and drinks may help to limit anxiety, too. [Here are some of the best.](#)

Anxiety usually involves racing thoughts, recurrent worries and revved-up body. Meditation can help manage all these symptoms but calming both your mind and your body. [Start off your meditation practice here.](#)

In addition, the art of focusing your breath can have a soothing effect. [Use this relaxation technique as a weapon in your anti-anxiety arsenal.](#)

The cruel aspect of social anxiety is the way in which it controls your thinking. The fear of being negatively evaluated by other people is a miserable way to live. Those negative thoughts are the equivalent of a bully, and like a bullies you don't have to put up with them. [This is something that you CAN get under control.](#)

Panic attacks are frightening episodes of anxiety. [But there are ways you can prevent a panic attack from escalating or minimize attacks in general.](#)

It's unrealistic to think that we can sail through life without any stressors, If symptoms of anxiety are interfering with your daily life, consider these simple lifestyle changes from Home Cures That Work that are proven natural cures for anxiety.

Cheryl Ravey
Editor, Home Cures That Work

ANXIETY



UNINSTALLING...

by Dr. Scott
Saunders, M.D.

What It Is Like to Live With Anxiety

Sheri can hardly function in life because of a gripping fear of everything. She lives in an apartment above the businesses in the center of town, but hasn't left her apartment in over five years. Everything is brought to her. She

shops online and on the Home Shopping Network.

A trip to her house is a trip indeed! Boxes she has purchased remain unopened, stacked four feet high around the whole apartment. There is a trail only six inches wide leading from the front door to the bed and from the bed to the bathroom and kitchen. She tried to leave her apartment a year ago. But only made it to the front steps before she got a panic attack and had to run back inside.

Panic is a type of severe anxiety from a sudden release of adrenal (stress) hormones. Short or long-term stress

produces large amounts of these hormones, causing severe anxiety. When this surge of stress hormones hit the body, people feel like they are going to die.

In a typical hospital emergency department, patients with severe anxiety often display symptoms of: chest pain, palpitations, lightheadedness, shortness of breath, and a fear of imminent death. They get blood tests, EKGs, X-rays, and even cardiac catheters to determine if they are having a heart attack. The symptoms of anxiety often mimic a heart attack. But more than 80% of the time there is no sign of heart trouble. Many people are

told, "It's just a panic attack."

Living with Anxiety

There seem to be multiple While panic attacks are the extreme, and happen to some people, anxiety is very common. In fact everyone feels anxiety at some point, like fear or trepidation.

Needles often provoke anxiety, such as before a vaccination or blood draw. Others feel anxiety before a test, interview, or court case. Most get anxious at the thought of public speaking. They get a dry mouth, sweaty palms, cold hands and feet, and palpitations of the heart. Even professional speakers, businessmen, or giving speeches or presentations experience anxiety.

The worst effect of an anxiety attack is on the brain. It causes disorganized thinking and poor memory, making it harder to present material. One speaker noted after many years of public speaking that the "butterflies" in his stomach didn't go away; they just flew in formation.[1]

Anxiety with a threat of loss is normal. Situations that cause anxiety are common to all people.

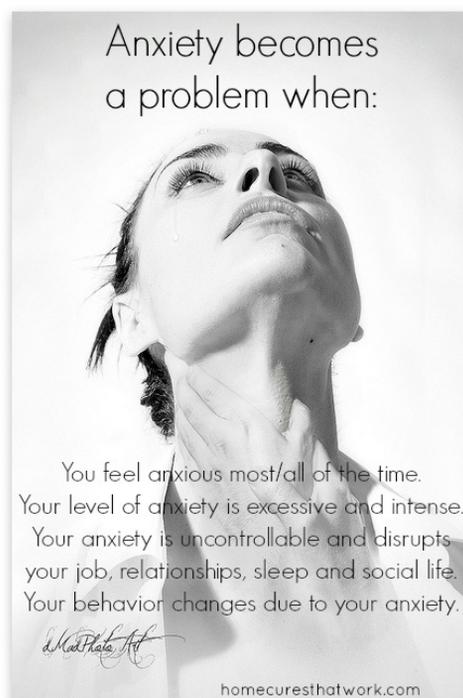
The purpose of anxiety is to warn us of danger. A

message of fear sends a signal to the adrenal glands that there is an emergency. We then release hormones from the adrenal glands such as adrenaline (epinephrine) and cortisol (cortisone) to help us get out of danger.

These stress hormones:

- Increase our blood sugar and heart rate for quick energy.
- Suppress our immune system and other "unnecessary" functions to protect our body.
- Create a multitude of effects on the brain, including a sense of fear, danger, imminent death or foreboding, as well as loss of memory.

Their overall effect is an



increase in circulation and energy to certain body systems and a downshift of less important ones into maintenance mode. In this way, the fight or flight response prepares the body for extreme action.

When there is danger our body doesn't need to function at capacity. We just need to get out of danger!

However, even when there is no danger present, the adrenal glands release the stress hormones causing all the same symptoms. This emergency response causes physical symptoms that many people misinterpret as a heart attack or other serious physical conditions. Misinterpreting these symptoms can cause anxiety and the fear response to continue.

Sheri would feel panic just from walking outside her door. She had no control over the release of hormones or how she felt; it just happened. She tried taking medications of all kinds, and received counseling, but nothing seemed to help at all. She was stuck.

The ways we categorize anxiety disorders include:

- Generalized Anxiety

Disorder (GAD) is constant worry or fear.

- Panic Disorder refers to those who get sudden panic attacks, feel out of control, or sense impending doom.
- Social Phobia feels like continually being embarrassed in public.
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is when fearful thoughts take control of one's actions. People then "have to" do things to relieve the anxiety.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) refers to those who have had major trauma that brings on chronic anxiety.

Anxiety becomes a problem when:

- You feel anxious most/all of the time for more than 6 months
- Your level of anxiety is excessive and intense
- Your anxiety is uncontrollable and disrupts your job, relationships, sleep and social life
- Your behavior changes due to your level of anxiety - this could be anything from drinking lots of tea, finding it hard to breathe, not being able to leave the house, or performing repetitive rituals, such as counting to 10 before you do something

Generally, anxiety is not considered abnormal unless it affects the normal functioning of the person, such as their ability to work, play, interact with others, or sleep, and has been present more than six months. And, of course, there are levels of anxiety – mild to severe.

Symptoms of anxiety may include one or more of the following:

- Fear
- Worry
- Shortness of breath, or unable to fill the lungs completely
- Jumpiness and feeling on edge
- Abdominal pain
- Swallowing problems, like a lump in the throat
- Stomach problems and difficulty digesting food
- Headaches of all types
- Sleep problems of all types
- Palpitations of the heart
- Chest pain or pressure
- Short-term memory problems
- Cold hands and feet
- Cold sweats
- Frequent urination
- Bad moods
- Eating, drinking or smoking more than usual

Mainstream Medical Treatment for Anxiety

Since the beginning of time people have used alcohol

The Many Faces of Anxiety

- Excessive stress or change
- Adrenal tumors
- Pituitary tumors
- Hypothalamic tumors
- Hormone imbalances
- Ectopic adrenal production
- Medication side-effects
- Dietary indiscretion
- Thought disorders
- Toxins such as heavy metals and pesticides
- Nutrient deficiencies like B-vitamins, minerals, or amino acids
- Loss of foundation, or shock such as a sudden illness, loss of a loved-one, or accident

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to relieve anxiety. Doctors call it “the drug of choice” for all types of anxiety and panic because people who have anxiety drink it. And those who have more anxiety, drink more.

- For some, it works so well they become “addicted” to alcohol. If they stop drinking, then they feel lots of anxiety.
- Others only use alcohol for occasional anxiety, or in the evening to relax after a stressful day at work.
- Some try to use it to sleep, but it disturbs sleep.

While it’s effective for anxiety, the side effects of alcohol can be devastating, as most of us know.

Standard medical treatment to relieve anxiety includes medications that stimulate the receptors in the brain that induce calm.

Most anxiety drugs, such as the benzodiazepines, work on the GABA receptors. Stimulating these receptors in the brain suppresses anxiety. Because GABA is an inhibitory neurotransmitter, it slows down the brain function in certain areas. It works immediately, but for only a few hours. However, tolerance to its effects is easily developed.

These medications, like Valium and similar drugs, work in much the same way as alcohol to numb anxiety. Valium was a godsend for many. In the 1960s they called it “mother’s little helper.” Valium allowed moms to be calm and relaxed with the children – without alcohol! Doctors originally believed it was not addictive, and only caused some drowsiness. However, this is not the case. Over time, people become tolerant to the level of stimulation provided by the drug and needed more.

When benzodiazepine treatment is stopped abruptly, patients may develop withdrawal symptoms. Some benzodiazepines, like Valium, can even cause seizures from withdrawal.

Now, the benzodiazepines have become standard fare for all types of anxiety. I had a patient who found that a benzodiazepine worked so well she carried one pill around for over a year, “just in case” she got a panic attack. It helped her to relax, knowing that relief was

available if she absolutely had to use it. She never did, and now doesn’t need it at all.

Other medical treatments that might help include antidepressants for anxiety. Most of these work on the serotonin receptors, which have a relaxing effect. This makes sense on a chemical level. Serotonin is a key neurotransmitter that has an effect on multiple brain functions, including anxiety.

Others work on dopamine or norepinephrine receptors as well, such as the “major tranquilizers” or antipsychotic drugs. The use of these for anxiety is becoming much more common. Some people with anxiety prefer opiates like morphine, codeine, and the like.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to anxiety. People have different reasons for being anxious and display different anxiety symptoms, and therefore need different types of medications to relieve anxiety.

The primary problem with

When there is danger our body doesn't
need to function at capacity. We
just need to get out of danger!

most of the medications used for anxiety is the same as with alcohol – they suppress all feeling and create numbness. Using drugs to resolve feelings is always a gamble. This is especially true when people have anxiety because they report they “don’t feel anything.” Some, of course, prefer to live this way. But many would like to try another way.

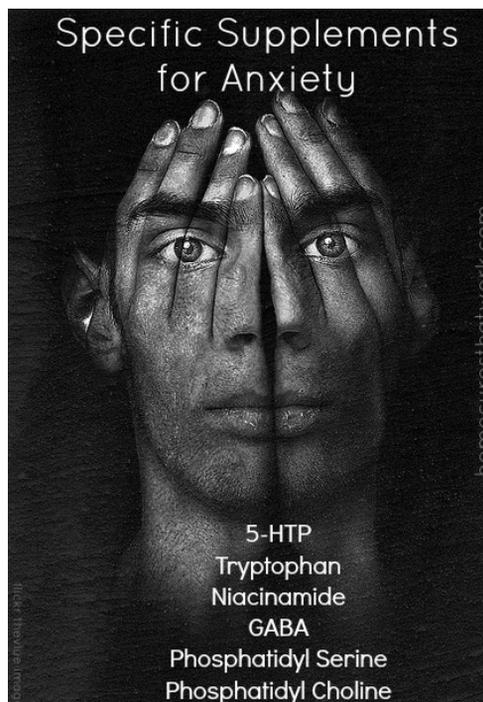
Determine the Cause of Anxiety

Medications may relieve anxiety symptoms for a short time. But they don’t take care of the problem, or address the cause of anxiety. The key to successfully treating anxiety is to find the cause(s) and remove them. There are many causes of anxiety:

- Excessive stress, or change
- Adrenal tumors
- Pituitary tumors
- Hypothalamic tumors
- Hormone imbalances (such as low progesterone)
- Ectopic adrenal production
- Medication side-effects
- Dietary indiscretion
- Toxins such as heavy metals and pesticides
- Nutrient deficiencies like B-vitamins, minerals, or amino acids
- Thought disorders
- Loss of foundation, or shock such as a sudden illness, loss of a loved-one, or accident

Once you find the cause of the problem, you can begin to change it at the roots, not just for temporary relief of anxiety symptoms. In looking at the list, it becomes apparent that this is no simple task. Some may require the help of a professional.

To end anxiety, follow the general recommendations and try each of the specific supplement and herb recommendations one at a time.



General Recommendations to Relieve Anxiety

- Meditation is very helpful for inducing calm by increasing levels of dopamine. One of my patients found reading Scriptures every night helped her sleep, allowing her to rest and relieving anxiety.
- Cognitive Behavioral

Therapy (CBT) is counseling on how to avoid triggers of anxiety, and how to calm the fears and worries.

- Breathing exercises help in many ways. I recommend the classic yoga technique of breathing. Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds, filling the lungs, hold it for 7 seconds, and breathe out for 8 seconds through your mouth. Do this three times in a row, twice per day.
- Counseling should help remove the shaky foundations that cause anxiety, and help you find a solid foundation on which to build your life. This often includes building faith, trust in God, and love, which take away fear.
- Exercise helps release endorphins that improve adrenal function. It takes as little as 20 minutes per day.
- Sleep early in the evening (9 or 10 p.m.) and get about 8 hours of sleep.
- Avoid stimulants:
 - Sugar/sweet/starchy foods (including stuff that is otherwise “good for you” like fruit)
 - Caffeine/sodas/energy drinks
 - Tea/coffee/yerba mate
 - Diet pills of any kind
 - Amphetamines (such as ADD drugs)
 - Alcohol
 - Tobacco

Specific Supplements for Anxiety

Take supplements depending on the problem. Try them individually or in combinations normally found together. Some are sedating so you may want to take them at night. Most of these work to increase serotonin and may be helpful for those who want to go off of an anti-depressant. Remember, both medications and supplements are assessed by how they work for you. So if they are not working, try something else. You are the only one who knows how you feel.

- 5-HTP – 100mg twice per day
- Tryptophan – 1000mg per day
- Niacinamide – 1000mg one to three times per day
- GABA – 500mg. Start with one per day and go up to as many as 8, if needed.
- Phosphatidyl Serine (PS) 100mg twice per day
- Phosphatidyl Choline (PC) 1000mg twice per day. This is especially good for OCD or bipolar disorder.

Herbs for Anxiety

Sedative herbs to help bring calm come in many ways, including capsules, leaves, teas, extracts, essential oils, and so forth. The best way to do this is to follow the directions on the label.

Be sure an herb is of good quality that has been tested. New York State recently did a study of herbal preparations and found that they rarely contained what they said they did. “The tests showed that pills labeled medicinal herbs often contained little more than cheap fillers like powdered rice, asparagus and houseplants, and in some cases substances



that could be dangerous to those with allergies.” [2]

The best herbs to try for anxiety that work in similar ways to the benzodiazepines include:

- Kava kava
- Chamomile
- L-Theanine
- Hops

- Valerian
- Lavender oil
- Lemon balm oil

Women in menopause often respond well to balancing the estrogen and progesterone and restoring sleep to relieve anxiety. Progesterone can have a great calming effect. Without progesterone women may begin to feel more overwhelmed and easily stressed. In many women, this leads to anxiety issues, including tension headaches, palpitations, digestive issues and more - and in some cases, even full blown panic disorder.

For those who have excessive adrenal output, adaptogens are your best friends. They are herbs to help provide the normal circadian rhythm. Stress is a normal part of life, and the better our ability to adapt to changes, the less anxiety we will have. Adaptogenic herbs can recharge your adrenal glands, helping you to respond to stress. Here are just a few of the most common, and most studied, adaptogens:

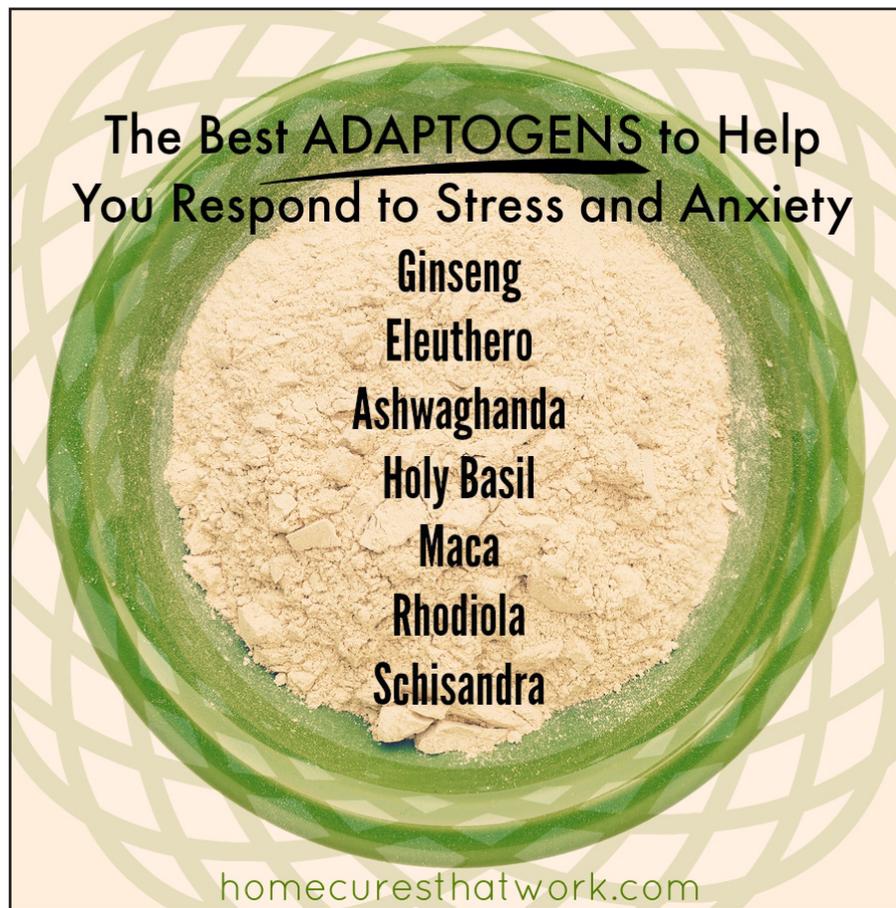
- Ginseng
- Eleuthero
- Ashwaganda
- Holy Basil
- Maca
- Rhodiola
- Schisandra

Many of these will come in combinations, which is often beneficial. However, don't just try one formulation and give up if it doesn't work. Different brands, and different formulations may help you more. If it seems to be an adrenal issue, keep trying different adaptogens until they help you respond to any influence or stressor, normalizing your anxiety.

Anxiety is very difficult to treat because there are so many causes, and it feeds itself in a vicious cycle. Most people who suffer from this problem have multiple causes.

Sheri, who had a severe form of panic disorder called agoraphobia, went on a program, and after testing and treatment was finally able to leave her apartment where she had been imprisoned for over 5 years! She still gets anxious, but the severe panic attacks

are controlled. It is possible. Be patient. Don't ever give up! There are answers, it just may not be obvious – or the one you think it is.



Sources[1] <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/1926.html>

[2] http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/03/new-york-attorney-general-targets-supplements-at-major-retailers/?_r=0



Dr. Scott D. Saunders, M.D. is a practicing physician, specializing in preventative health care, who utilizes eclectic health care for the whole family, including conventional, orthomolecular and natural medicine. He is also the medical director of The Integrative Medical Center of Santa Barbara in Lompoc, CA. He went to UCLA medical school and is board certified in family medicine. View natural remedies with Dr. Saunders at: <http://drsaundersmd.com>

FOODS TO CALM AND LOWER YOUR ANXIETY

by Amanda Box, N.D.

Controlling Gut Behavior

We have all felt it at some point in our lives. The feeling that paralyzes us sends us into a cold sweat and lends our heart to beat at the speed of light. Anxiety is fear incarnate. It originates from our worries, our fear of failure or simply believing worst is bound to happen.

I personally battle with anxiety. I loathe the awful sense of powerlessness that anxiety brings. But it is a battle

over the mind and one that isn't always easily won!

Releasing negative thoughts and replacing them with positive ones can overcome anxiety. One important way to do this is processing through thoughts and fears on paper and with a friend or counselor.

However, what you put into your body can also affect the intensity of your anxiety. Though much of anxiety originates from thoughts and mindset, a healthy body is important for a healthy mind! Our mind, body and spirit are interconnected. So keeping all three aspects healthy is imperative for overcoming anxiety.

Food affects our mood. Particular foods create calm, while other foods produce anxiety. The key

to overcoming afflicting anxiety just may be a diet that enhances a sense of peace and a calm mind.

Below are two lists of foods. The first is the list of foods to avoid that promote anxiety. These foods stimulate the nervous system or increase stress hormone production like cortisol. If you battle anxiety, then totally eliminate these foods from your diet to feel your best.

The second is a list of foods that help ease anxiety. These foods contain nutrients that promote a calm mind and help lower stress levels in the body. Make them a regular part of your diet and they will keep you calm and lower your anxiety.

4 Foods to Avoid for Anxiety

1. Caffeine

This is by far the most obvious food on the list to avoid. Caffeine is a nervous system stimulant and can cause physical manifestations of anxiety, even if anxious thoughts aren't present. It speeds the heart rate and can lead to an over-excited jittery feeling that exacerbates or creates anxiety. Some people do well with just a small amount of caffeine in the morning. However, eliminating it all together is best for calming the mind and body.

2. Sugar

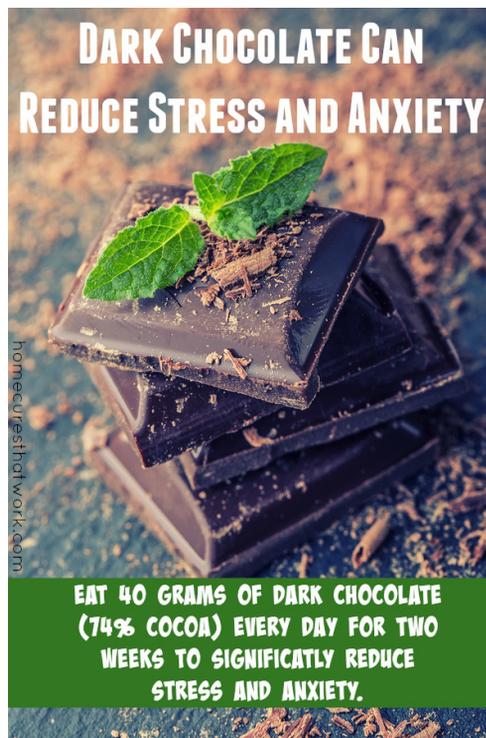
When I refer to sugar, I am not just referring to white sugar. I am referring to all things that encompass sugar: fruit juice, corn syrup and honey, etc. All these sugary foods can negatively affect the body. They spike blood sugar levels which, in turn, flood your body with cortisol, a stress hormone. When cortisol levels are high, you can feel on edge and anxious. Therefore, steer clear of sugary drinks and desserts. Instead, opt for natural sweeteners that do not affect the blood sugar such as stevia.

3. Processed Foods

Processed foods included already made meals like boxed foods and fast foods. These foods contain a plethora of ingredients that

are nearly unpronounceable. This abundance of fake food is not tolerated well by your body. Chemicals from the artificial preservatives and other ingredients can aggravate the brain by exciting neurotransmitters. This creates a sense of anxiousness and overstimulation. Many of the artificial ingredients are additive as well. Your body begins to crave these processed foods and you become anxious if you're not able to eat them. The best way to avoid processed foods is to choose foods as close to their natural state as possible and cook your meals from scratch.

Also, read labels. If you see ingredients that sound more like chemicals than food, but it back on the shelf and



buy something healthier!

4. Alcohol

Many people drink alcohol to help calm their nerves. However, alcohol can backfire. It can cause an even higher level of anxiety the following day.

- Alcohol depresses the body.
- That depression can carry through to the following day.
- Depression feeds anxiousness.

The short term fix that alcohol creates can also be addictive, creating a cycle of anxiety and more depression.

Foods to Eat to Calm Anxiety

Pumpkin Seeds

Green pumpkin seeds are high in zinc. Studies have found that anxiety is linked to a zinc copper imbalance. Too much copper and not enough zinc in your body can cause anxiety. Just a small handful a day of pumpkin seeds provides a daily dose of zinc! Pumpkin seeds provide a healthy balance that offers relief for people suffering from anxiety.

Fatty Fish

Fish rich in omega 3 fatty acids such as salmon and sardines can increase EPA levels in the brain. EPA is the primary anti-inflammatory omega-3

fatty acid for the brain. High levels of EPA are correlated to a calmer mood and lessened anxiety. Essentially, EPA will make you happier and better able to handle stress. If you don't consume large amounts of fish, then purified fish oil supplements can increase your EPA. The

Dark chocolate

In a study of chocolate's health benefits, eating 40 grams of dark chocolate (74% cocoa) every day for two weeks significantly reduced stress hormone levels. Those tested also noted feeling less anxious after eating the chocolate. This is likely due to cocoa's flavonol content. Flavonols are a subclass of flavonoids, natural chemicals found in plants, fruits and vegetables that repair cellular damage. Flavonoids are antioxidants so they help to lower stress and inflammation throughout the body.

Turkey

Turkey is high in amino acid L-tryptophan, which is a precursor to serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that helps you feel calm. Tryptophan found in protein like turkey has been found in studies to lower anxiety levels!

Full-fat yogurt or kefir

The majority (95%!) of

serotonin, your feel good neurotransmitter that keeps you happy and calm, is produced in the gut. Therefore it is important to eat foods that help maintain proper intestinal balance.

To cultivate proper bacterial balance in the gut, go no further than your refrigerator! Naturally elevate your mood and reverse anxiety with fermented foods. The bacteria in fermented foods create an environment suitable for proper serotonin production. Fermented foods like kefir and yogurt contain probiotics that restore your gut health. Since gut microbes may influence your behavior, this is proof that fermented foods make us happier!

Tea (chamomile and green tea)

Each of these teas has anxiety reducing benefits.

The effect of chamomile is to soothe and calm the nervous system. When feeling anxious, drink chamomile to relax. Studies showed drinking chamomile tea lowered anxiety in 2 weeks! Best of all, chamomile comes without the nasty side effects of traditional anxiety and depression medications.

Green tea contains amino acid L-theanine, which has a soothing, calming effect on people who drink it. L-Theanine stimulates production of brain waves known as alpha waves. Alpha waves indicate a person is relaxed. L-Theanine also increases the levels of neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine in the brain. These two neurotransmitters directly affect a person's mood and help induce a sense of calm and relaxation.

So, alleviate your mood and feel better by drinking quality green tea!

Eggs

Eggs contain copious amounts of choline, needed for the synthesis of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Acetylcholine



is essentially the opposite of adrenaline. It induces a state of relaxation and promotes sleep. Farm raised cage free eggs are the best choice.

They are fresher and have higher levels of nutrients.

Eggs just may give you a new reason to come out of any depressing anxiety phase!

Green Leafy Vegetables

Green leafy vegetables are low in calories, and high in many nutrients, including magnesium.

Magnesium is a natural nervous system relaxant. A lack of magnesium can cause electrical changes in your brain.

Most diets are deficient in magnesium, and stress causes our bodies to deplete this important mineral. This is why getting enough magnesium in your diet while you're stressed is so important. This essential mineral is key to relaxation and a lowered sense of anxiety. Nutrition just may trump any other form of self-help anxiety methods!

The Gut-Brain Connection

As mentioned earlier, our gut and our brain have an intimate connection. Many refer to the gut as the second brain, and for good reason! Our enteric nervous system is the name of the nervous system that

resides in our gastrointestinal tract and enables us to “feel” the inner world of our gut and its contents. It is equipped with its own reflexes and senses to control gut behavior.

Our central nervous system, which is located in our brain and spinal column, is connected through the vagus nerve, which runs from the brain stem down to the abdomen.

It is through the vagus nerve that gut bacteria transmit information to the brain. Thus, the nerves in our gut probably influence a big part of our emotions.

Also, the gut produces more serotonin in the gut than it

does in the brain. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that helps us to feel good and it produces a sense of calm. This gut-brain connection applies to anxiety levels as well.

Dr. Kirsten Tillish, a lead author in a study of gut bacteria and anxiety stated, “Time and time again, we hear from patients that they never felt depressed or anxious until they started experiencing problems with their gut.”

All of this makes creating a healthy gut environment key to overcoming anxiety. I believe there are 3 keys to creating a healthy gut.

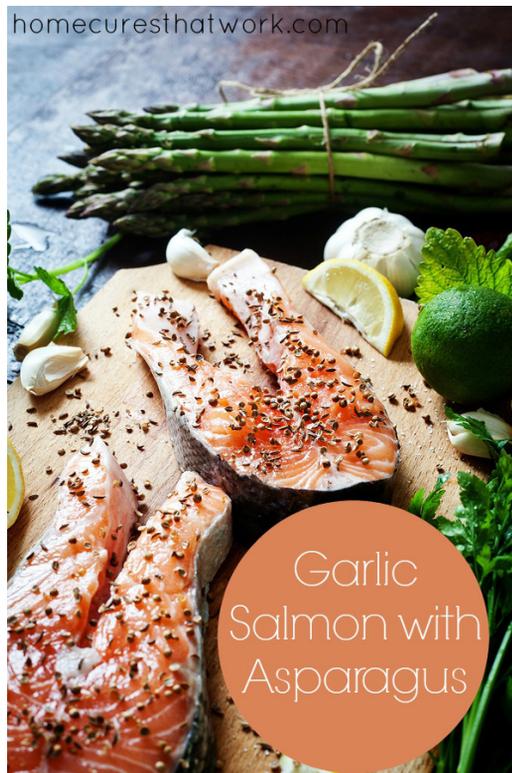
1. Probiotics

Supplementation with a daily multi-strain probiotic is important in creating a healthy bacterial environment in the gut. Fermented foods such as kefir, yogurt, sauerkraut and kombucha are also great to add into your daily diet to boost healthy bacteria.

2. Prebiotics

Prebiotics are dietary fibers that act as food for good bacteria. This allows the healthy bacteria to multiply. Some foods containing prebiotics include:

- Chicory Root
- Asparagus
- Bananas
- Garlic



- Onion
- Jerusalem artichoke

3. Going Gluten Free

More and more research is pointing out that gluten intolerance and diseases such as Celiac, can cause anxiety and depression. Shockingly, as much as 80% of the population is thought to have some degree of gluten sensitivity!

Lectins contained in gluten can cause intestinal inflammation and permeability of the intestinal walls allowing toxic microbes to pass through the gut, into the bloodstream and to the brain causing anxiety! Some even believe that gluten itself can cause anxiety. Dr. Rodney Ford, a New Zealand-based pediatrician and author of *The Gluten Syndrome*, believes that gluten harms your nervous system directly and produces symptoms such as anxiety.

Going gluten free takes a firm commitment and cannot be done partially. I've been gluten free for nearly a year now and have no plans to go back. It has changed the health of my gut and my mind dramatically and has been worth the sacrifice. Honestly, with the rise of gluten free alternatives, I haven't had to sacrifice much. Nearly every gluten product now has a tasty gluten free version.

Incorporating these 3 keys will create a healthy "second brain" and lower your anxiety levels. You'll truly be amazed at how powerful the gut-brain connection is once you begin to make changes to your diet!

Below are two recipes to get you on the road to lowered anxiety and a healthy gut. The first is a salmon recipe. This incorporates the omega 3s from fatty fish and prebiotics such as garlic. Serve this with a healthy serving of asparagus on the side for even more prebiotic power. This recipe is also gluten-free!

Garlic Salmon with Asparagus

Ingredients:

- 1 lb wild caught salmon
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp cold organic butter, cubed
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp Italian seasoning
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley

Directions:

1. Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine the lemon juice and minced garlic; allow the lemon juice to

reduce to 1 tablespoon. Add in 1 tablespoon of butter, remove pan from heat and swirl so the butter starts to melt. Place back on the heat for a few seconds, removed and continue to swirl until butter completely melts. Repeat with second tablespoon of butter. When butter is completely melted, remove sauce from stove.

3. Place the salmon filet in a piece of foil large enough to fold over and seal. Using a brush or spoon, brush the salmon with the garlic butter sauce. Season with salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, and red pepper flakes. Cover with foil so that all sides are properly closed so the sauce does not leak.
4. Bake the salmon for 12-14 minutes or until firm. Open the foil and allow the fish to broil under the broiler for 2-3 minutes, keeping an eye on it so the fish does not burn. Remove from oven, top with parsley. Serve with a side of steamed asparagus.

This next recipe incorporates the mood lifting power of dark chocolate with zinc rich pumpkin seeds. Though only two ingredients, these little bites can calm a sweet tooth as well as calm the mind.

Dark Chocolate Pumpkin Seed Bites

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp of dark chocolate (at least 74% cocoa content)
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds (raw or roasted)

Directions:

1. Melt chocolate in the microwave for 20 seconds. Heat for 10 second intervals, making sure to stir in between.
2. On a piece of wax paper drip chocolate from a spoon and make 8 even circles around the size of a quarter.
3. Sprinkle the pumpkin seeds into the chocolate and slightly press down.
4. Let dry for around an hour or place in the fridge for even faster results.

Remember, what you eat can have a huge influence on the levels of anxiety you're feeling. Don't rely on simply medications any longer! Take your health into your hands and begin eating in a way that lowers your

anxiety. I have personally experienced the power of food choices on my anxiety and I encourage you to as well!

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homecuresthatwork.com

Salmon recipe adapted from littlespicejar.com



Amanda Box is a Traditional Naturopath and a graduate of Clayton College of Natural Health. She's been in the health and wellness industry for over 12 years and currently practices naturopathic consulting in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. If you don't have a good local naturopathic practitioner to turn to for your personal needs, Amanda does phone consultations! She can help you with weight loss, detox/cleansing, acute and chronic illnesses, skin and body care, grocery shopping, pantry overhauls, and more! Visit her blog "My Life in a Healthnut Shell" at <http://amandabox.blogspot.com/> for contact info.



5 STEPS TO LOWER YOUR ANXIETY ~NOW~

by Amanda Box, N.D.

How to Balance Hormones and Calm the Mind

You can feel it rising. Like water it begins to pool around your feet. Then it slowly rises up your body until you are fully submerged, unable to breathe, drowning in your own fears.

This is how I describe my experience with anxiety. It is a feeling that I am too familiar with and one that many of you have suffered as well. Many people face regular bouts of anxiety that can profoundly affect their lives. They may be unable to work or

have healthy social lives. For others, anxiety may be brought on by high pressure situations such as taking a test.

Whatever the case may be, one thing's for certain. Anxiety is absolutely paralyzing! It keeps us from experiencing the joys of our life, sets us up to fail and minimizes our greatest potentials.

The good news? You can beat anxiety in 5 steps! You can cut the chains that bind you and set yourself free for a life full of positivity and success!

There can be many underlying factors behind anxiety. Traumatic life events such as a death of a loved one or financial problems can trigger anxiety in people who formerly led a happy productive life! This stress induced anxiety

can snowball and disrupt the body to the point that hormonal changes and body imbalances begin to occur. Once specific hormones such as cortisol are out of balance, it is much like throwing gasoline on a fire. The frequency and strength of anxiety begins to increase and take over a person's life.

Many people also struggle with anxiety, but because the symptoms don't manifest in the more obvious ways such as irrational fears or impending doom, they don't realize that anxiety is the culprit behind their health problems. When we stuff our feelings and don't let them out, the built up stress can lead to anxiety which manifests in ways such as:

- Tachycardia
- Digestive issues
- Difficulty focusing
- Sleep disorders

These symptoms often resolve themselves once the underlying stress and anxiety is properly addressed. Stress itself is the cause of 75-90% of all disease! It is imperative to address and relieve stress in order to live a healthy long life!

The Role of Cortisol with Anxiety

Addressing the root cause and imbalance behind anxiety can calm the mind and body to bring true relief from symptoms. One of the most common body imbalances that occurs with anxiety has to do with cortisol. Cortisol is a hormone released by the adrenal glands in response to fear or stress as part of the fight-or-flight reaction.

Often referred to as our stress hormone, cortisol is responsible for three major functions that keep our body in balance during times of stress:

- Raising blood sugar
- Increasing blood pressure
- Regulating inflammation

Cortisol and anxiety have a cyclical relationship. When you experience anxiety, which is a form of stress, you automatically release cortisol. However, having excess cortisol in the body can cause anxiety and contribute to anxiety attacks! Your cortisol imbalance may have caused your anxiety, but your anxiety may also have caused your cortisol imbalance.

When cortisol levels build up in the blood, your mind and body are profoundly affected. If you struggle with anxiety, I'm sure those symptoms sound very familiar!

- High levels of cortisol can lead to a nervous stomach, jitters, feelings of panic,

and even paranoia.

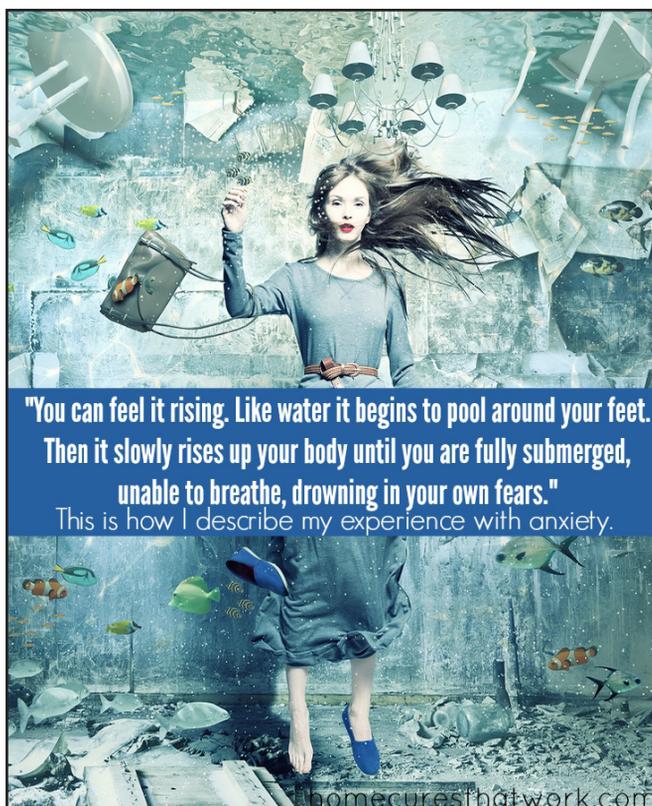
- High levels of cortisol also suppress the production of serotonin, which leads to feelings of loss of hope and depression.

Failing to manage stress in your life will lead to increased cortisol production and ultimately cause anxiety.

Cortisol is typically released in a regular, timed fashion or rhythm that repeats daily. In a healthy person, cortisol is highest in the morning helping us to wake up and be alert and energetic. It begins to taper off throughout the day and by evening melatonin is released which helps us to sleep.

When anxiety sounds the alarm, our body releases cortisol and becomes ready for action. However, without an actual release of a physical flight or fight action, cortisol builds up in the blood. Over time, chronically high cortisol levels begin to negatively affect our bodies. Some of the most common symptoms of high cortisol levels include:

- Digestive issues
- Impaired circulation
- Disrupted sleep/ wake cycles
- Extreme fatigue



- Low sex drive
- Depressed mood

Lowering Your Cortisol Levels Naturally

Bringing your cortisol down to a healthy, balanced level is key in overcoming anxiety.

There are 5 steps to lower your cortisol levels that are both safe and extremely effective. Adding even one of these steps into your daily routine can make a big difference. However, incorporating all 5 of these steps will help you achieve maximum anxiety reducing results.

1. Relax your mind

Your mind is incredibly powerful. So powerful that it can control anxiety even if the anxiety is related to a hormonal imbalance! Prayer, meditation and even listening to calming music can greatly reduce your stress levels and leave you feeling less anxious.

Wholetones Chroma, a combination of both sonic and visual frequencies is an extremely effective way to bring your body into balance and a sense of calm to your mind. Simply watch this DVD on your TV or computer and relax, letting these body-balancing frequencies do their work. To learn more and also to purchase this product,

visit www.wholetones.com

2. Regular exercise

Exercise is one of the best ways to combat anxiety. During bouts of anxiety, however, getting up and moving is the last thing that person wants to do. But pushing through the difficulty is truly worth it!

Regular exercise not only reduces stress levels, but it also releases endorphins that elevate our mood! Many people find that yoga works well at reducing stress because it not only provides exercise, but incorporates breathing techniques that calm the body and lower stress as well.

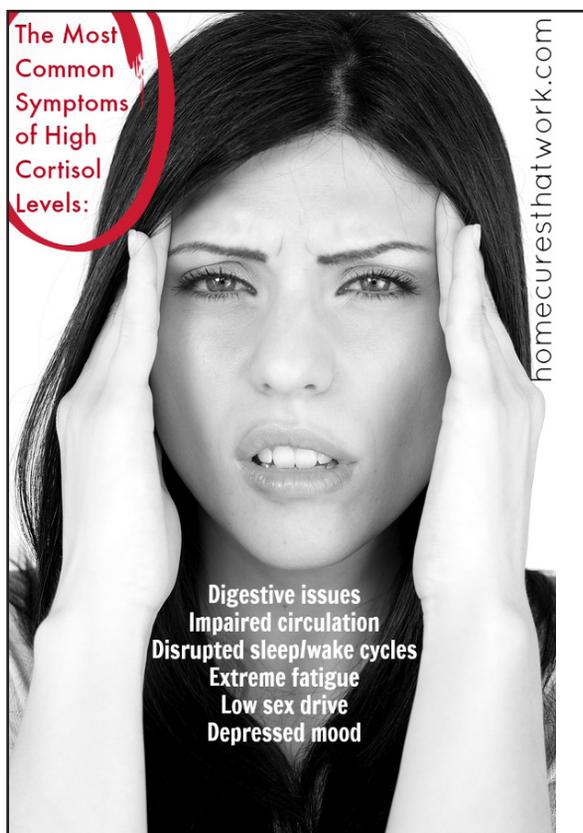
Any sort of exercise provides stress reducing benefits. Whether it is a 30-minute walk or an hour session of lifting weights, getting the body moving and working on a daily basis provides an outlet for stress and boosts your mood.

3. Earthing

This practice, otherwise known as grounding, is a very effective way of restoring the body's natural hormonal rhythm. Studies showed that practicing grounding produced measurable improvements in which cortisol levels significantly reduced during night-time sleep. Twenty-four hour cortisol profiles also displayed normalization in levels after grounding. Also, symptoms such as sleep dysfunction, pain, and stress, were reduced or eliminated in nearly all subjects!

Earthing is the practice of allowing your bare skin to come into direct contact with the earth's surface. Positive electrons in the form of free radicals can build up in our bodies. When we have direct skin contact to the ground, it balances our bodies with a negative grounding charge.

Earthing can be performed by walking barefoot outside or swimming in lakes or in the ocean. If you aren't able to make direct contact with the ground



regularly, there are many different earthing products that bring the earth's negative energy into your home. Earthing mats and earthing sheets are the most popular and help to balance your body while you sleep.

4. Essential oils

Using essential oils is another great way to lower anxiety levels. Once essential oils are inhaled, they are converted to an electrical charge, which is sent to the olfactory bulb. These signals impact brain chemical production thereby affecting both mental and physical health.

Essential oils can have a profound impact on our emotional and psychological responses. They can provide a calming effect by acting on our nervous system. This can help relax our muscles, slow our heart rate and decrease our blood pressure.

Looking to try out essential oils for yourself? I suggest adding calming essential oils to a diffuser or simply inhaling them straight from the bottle when you begin to feel anxious.

The 3 best essential oils for stress include:

- Lavender: It is such a calming and attractive scent. Add it to your bath water, your perfume or even to your deodorant! It

is a deeply relaxing scent.

- Orange: Orange is an essential oil that cannot only help improve anxious feelings but also boost your mood. When diffused, it brings a sense of happiness and well-being.
- Frankincense: Frankincense activates poorly understood ion channels in the brain to alleviate anxious feelings.

5. Herbs and supplements

There are a plethora of fantastic herbs and other supplements that have a profound effect on lowering anxiety levels. Many of these supplements are safe substitutes for common, potentially addictive psychoactive drugs used for anxiety.

Some of the best herbs and supplements for managing anxiety and lowering stress and cortisol levels include:

Holy Basil

Often referred to as Tulsi, holy basil is a plant that originated in India. It contains strong adaptogen compounds to help the body adapt to stress: eugenol and caryophyllene. These two compounds lower cortisol levels and improve the way the body reacts and responds to increases in stress.

You can take holy basil to reduce the amount of

stress hormones your body will produce when it is under stress. Holy Basil can also help improve mood and mental clarity.

L-Theanine

This amino acid is found in green tea and has the ability to lower stress, enhance relaxation and promote normal sleep patterns. It is a GABA supporting compound that promotes relaxation by lowering neuron activity in the brain.

Studies have noted L-theanine's ability to lower anxiety levels. Results showed that highly anxious students receiving the L-theanine had a slower heartbeat, improved concentration, and better reaction times compared to members of the same group receiving a placebo. Unlike pharmaceutical drugs, L-theanine did not result in increased drowsiness, slowed reflexes, or impaired concentration.

To reduce anxiety, take 100-200 mg a day of L-theanine daily.

GABA

This important neurotransmitter is a precursor to dopamine and the primary inhibitor in the brain for excitatory activity. Essentially, GABA helps to calm the mind and body. Low levels of GABA can be associated with anxiety, making

its supplementation very helpful in alleviating anxiety symptoms.

A dosage of 350-500 mg a day is best for alleviating anxiety.

Rhodiola

Undoubtedly, rhodiola is one of the best adaptogen herbs on the planet. Rhodiola has the ability to lower stress levels and calm the mind by lowering cortisol levels in the body. It contains a phytochemical known as salidroside to alleviate anxiety. Rhodiola also helps maintain appetite and sleeping after stress, and fights fatigue. Rhodiola can also slow your heart rate during anxiety and increases your use of oxygen.

I have found relief using many of these supplements. A combination called Theanine Serene by

Source Naturals contains a combination of nearly all the listed supplements making it a convenient, price effective combination.

Having battled anxiety myself, I have found that incorporating these 5 steps into my life has made a significant difference. I encourage you to try these steps for yourself. When you feel the tide rising, and the waves of anxiety begin to threaten your shores:

1. Take the time to calm your mind.
2. Step outside and walk barefoot in your yard.
3. Inhale calming essential oils.
4. Exercise at least 3-4 times a week.
5. Begin taking adaptogen supplements to lower anxiety and prevent it from occurring.

These 5 steps changed my life and they can change yours as well! Take these steps down a path towards clear, happy and hopeful thoughts.



Sources: <http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/20060203/best-ways-to-ease-anxiety-disorders>, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15650465>, <http://qualitycounts.com/fptheanine.htm>,



Amanda Box is a Traditional Naturopath and a graduate of Clayton College of Natural Health. She's been in the health and wellness industry for over 12 years and currently practices naturopathic consulting in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. If you don't have a good local naturopathic practitioner to turn to for your personal needs, Amanda does phone consultations! She can help you with weight loss, detox/cleansing, acute and chronic illnesses, skin and body care, grocery shopping, pantry overhauls, and more! Visit her blog "My Life in a Healthnut Shell" at <http://amandabox.blogspot.com/> for contact info.



How to Take Control of Your Anxiety

by Rob Fischer

An Anti-Anxiety Workout

What works as well (or feels better) than medication for calming anxiety, but without the nasty side effects? Before I answer that question, consider some of the causes of anxiety: [1], [2]

- Feeling out of control
- Chronic stress with no relief
- A sense of hopelessness
- Stress chemicals in the blood
- A depleted immune system
- Inactivity
- Poor self-esteem
- A sense of foreboding about what might happen

- Reduced cognitive function

At some time or another, everyone feels anxious about something. But when anxiety becomes the norm in your life, you may begin to feel like its slave. Anxiety disorders afflict about 40 million adults in the US, making it the number one psychiatric illness.[3] If you find yourself suffering from chronic anxiety, it's time to take action and do something about it.

What is so effective against anxiety? Let me ease you into that answer...

If you've ever been plagued with anxiety, depression or chronic stress you know that when your mind and emotions are taxed to the limit, so is your body. Your body begins to show the signs

of anxiety in a variety of ways that may include: high blood pressure, high blood sugar, a weakened immune system, sleeplessness, and a host of other physical problems.

So it's no stretch of logic to recognize that when your body feels better, so does your mind.[4] A key solution to dealing with the physical and emotional symptoms of anxiety is physical activity. Exercise can not only alleviate the symptoms of anxiety, it can literally pull you out of that dark hole and get you moving upward and forward again.

When you have anxiety or depression, exercise often seems like the last thing you want to do. But once you get motivated, exercise can make a big difference.

10 Ways Exercise Helps Calm Anxiety

Here's what the research is showing: [5], [6], [7]

1. Gain Confidence

Regular aerobic exercise decreases tension, improves mood, helps you sleep better, and feel better about yourself.

2. Release Feel Good Chemicals

Physical exercise stimulates the release of endorphins in the brain that make you feel good, both physically and emotionally.

3. Relieve Pain

Just like you might take an aspirin for a headache, a brisk walk or other simple exercise can provide several hours of relief.

4. Take Your Mind Off Your Worries

Exercise can help the brain cope and feel better with stress.

5. Produce Calming Effect

Aerobic exercise lowers the amount of stress chemicals in your bloodstream that lead to and worsen anxiety.

6. Cope in a Healthy Way

Exercise helps distract you from the dark thoughts that plague your mind and replaces them with positive, productive energy.

7. Shrink Anxiety

Regular physical activity offers both short-term and long-term benefits for reducing anxiety.

8. Maintain Motivation

When you find an activity that you really enjoy, participating in that activity gives you something pleasurable to look forward to.

9. Strengthen the Immune System

Exercise helps build a strong immune system that keeps you healthier both physically and emotionally.

10. Socially Rewarding

Exercise recharges your emotional batteries. If you choose to exercise with others, the social interaction adds to the benefits. If you'd rather exercise solo, you'll find respite from stress and come back feeling renewed.

What Type of Exercise Do I Need to Ward Off Anxiety?

Although all forms of exercise are good for you, aerobic exercise in particular has been found to be most effective in reducing stress and anxiety.[8] Aerobic exercise gets your heart rate elevated higher than normal (but not pounding or racing); and requires you to breathe more deeply. Breathing more deeply supplies you

with higher volumes of oxygen that does wonders for your health and mood.

Examples of aerobic exercise include: brisk walking, hiking, bicycling, running/jogging, rowing, swimming, dancing, and sports like basketball, racket ball, and tennis.

Tips for Getting Started

1. Find an exercise you enjoy!

You must find an activity that you enjoy, or can learn to enjoy. For example, would you rather spend your time gardening, playing basketball with the grandkids or take a relaxing walk in the evening? Don't even bother forcing yourself to do something you don't enjoy, because you won't stick with it and it may even add to your anxiety.

2. Exercise outdoors!

If at all possible, exercise outdoors. Getting out into nature adds so many other benefits to your activity beyond the exercise itself. Being in nature makes you feel more alive. Enjoying flowers in bloom; birds chirping; a gurgling brook; and a host of other pleasantries that tantalize the senses go a long way to boosting your mood. Nature can lead you to a surge of energy!

3. Start slowly!

If you're unaccustomed to regular physical activity, then start slowly. This will help you avoid injuries or discouragement due to over-taxing your muscles and joints. Give yourself credit for every step in the right direction, no matter how small.

4. Get the right equipment!

Even if your activity is walking, purchase some good walking shoes to make your walks more pleasant and to avoid injuries. You don't have to spend a lot of money, but good, quality equipment is worth the cost.

5. Find an exercise buddy!

Not only can a friend help you be more consistent, but having someone to socialize with can also lift your mood.

6. View exercise as a prescription!

Consult your health care provider before establishing an exercise plan. Many doctors will prescribe exercise for anxiety. Think realistically about what you may be able to do and begin gradually. Tailor your plan to your own needs and abilities rather than trying to meet unrealistic guidelines that you're unlikely to meet. Work up to exercising

five days a week for at least 30 minutes. This will maximize the results you'll experience from exercise. Exercising for less time, but on more days is far more beneficial than trying to get it all in on the weekend. It's like drinking wine. A glass of wine per day may be healthy, but if you drink a whole week's worth on the weekend, you'll suffer for it. The same is true with exercise.

7. Stay hydrated!

Not drinking enough water may contribute to anxiety or worsen it.[9] When a person gets dehydrated, their hormones begin to fail, which can directly affect mood. Besides, drinking plenty of water is vital for overall health.

As with any therapy or medication, people are unique and respond to treatments in a variety of ways. But many people think of exercise or physical activity as a chore and quickly become discouraged. For this reason, don't overdo exercise especially as you start out following the tips above. Instead, look at your exercise or physical activity schedule the same way you look at your therapy sessions or medication — as one of the

tools to help you get better.

While this article focuses on the positive effects of regular aerobic exercise on anxiety and depression, remember that exercise does wonders for your physical body as well. And as your body feels better, so will your mind.

Anxiety stems from a sense of loss of control, but as you've seen in this article, physical exercise can help you regain control.

A good friend with whom I have often hiked in the mountains would stop on the trail, take a deep breath, look around at all the beauty and declare, "Can't you just feel the stress melting from your body?" I wish that sensation for you too!

If you suffer from anxiety, then exercise may be a simple cure. Because you'll not only feel more confident, energized, and calm — you'll be a healthier and happier person for life.

If you're not already engaged in a regular fitness plan, start today. Follow the guidelines provided above and take charge of your anxiety.

Sources: [1] Anxiety and Depression Association of America, "Exercise for Stress and Anxiety," nd, <http://www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/managing-anxiety/exercise-stress-and-anxiety>. [2] Mayo Clinic, "Depression and Anxiety: Exercise Eases Symptoms," October 10, 2014, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-depth/depression-and-exercise/art-20046495?pg=1>. [3] Anxiety and Depression Association of America. [4] Anxiety and Depression Association of America. [5] Anxiety and Depression Association of America. [6] Mayo Clinic. [7] Calm Clinic, "Can You Beat Anxiety by Exercising?" nd, <http://www.calmclinic.com/anxiety/treatment/exercising>. [8] Help Guide, "How Exercise Benefits Depression, Anxiety, and Stress," nd, <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/exercise-fitness/emotional-benefits-of-exercise.htm>. [9] Calm Clinic, "Can Anxiety Be Caused by Water Dehydration?" nd, <http://www.calmclinic.com/anxiety/causes/waterdehydration>.

BREATHING YOUR WAY...

OUT OF ANXIETY

by Rob Fischer

Breathing Exercises to Overcome Panic Attacks

Suddenly, inexplicably Shawna found herself overcome with fear. She knew she didn't like flying, but for some reason this flight sent her over the edge. They had just taken off and were experiencing some heavy turbulence as they climbed to altitude.

Her heart raced as sweat trickled down the small of her back. She couldn't catch her breath. Her hands trembled so much that she gripped the armrests until her knuckles turned white. She had difficulty swallowing. Momentarily, she thought she might lose consciousness...

What I have just described is a panic attack. When a person experiences a panic attack, their fear response is blown out of proportion to the situation in which they find themselves. Panic attacks, an intensified form of anxiety, can occur without warning. To make matters worse, once a person has had a panic attack, the fear of having another one heightens

their anxiety possibly making such an attack a self-fulfilling prophecy.[1]

Anxiety, fear and panic are debilitating. They rob a person of their ability to respond to a situation rationally whether that situation is threatening or normal.

Often, when a person experiences a panic attack or acute anxiety, they feel like they can't catch their breath. And the harder they try, the more difficult it becomes to breathe and the worse their panic attack spirals.

Dr. David Carbonell, Anxiety Coach, explains, "When you feel like you can't catch your breath, it's because you

forgot to do something. You forgot to exhale. That's right. Before you can take a deep breath, you have to give one away. Why? Because, when you've been breathing in a short, shallow manner (from your chest), if you try and take a deep inhale, you just can't do it. All you can do is take a more labored, shallow breath from your chest.”[2]

Dr. Carbonell goes on to describe the “Belly Breathing Exercise” as a means to overcoming this common problem. Follow these guidelines to learn and master this exercise:[3]

1. Place one hand on your belly, just above your waist and put your other hand on your chest over your breastbone. Your hands will provide you with biofeedback as you practice this exercise.
2. “Open your mouth and gently sigh, as if someone had just told you something really annoying. As you do, let your shoulders and the muscles of your upper body relax, down, with the exhale.” Don't completely empty your lungs, but relax the muscles of your upper body.
3. Now close your mouth and relax for a few seconds.
4. Keeping your mouth closed, inhale slowly through your

nose by pushing your belly out. When you've inhaled a comfortable amount of air, stop inhaling.

5. Pause briefly for whatever length of time you find comfortable. Because you're taking larger breaths than you're used to, it's important that you breathe more slowly.
6. Now repeat steps 2 through 5, establishing a rhythm to your breathing. Click here to view a short video demonstrating this breathing technique.

Shallow breathing contributes to anxiety and panic attacks. This practice of deliberate, deep breathing stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), which helps place the body at rest.

In their book, *The Healing Power of the Breath*, Richard P. Brown, M.D. and Patricia L. Gerbarg, M.D. explain, “By voluntarily changing the rate, depth, and pattern of breathing, we can change the messages being sent from the body's respiratory system to the brain. Messages from the respiratory system have rapid, powerful effects on major brain centers involved in thought, emotion, and behavior.”[5]

In addition to the belly breathing exercise above,

another breathing exercise is called “Coherent Breathing.” This method calls for breathing at a rate of just five breaths per minute. You can achieve this rate by inhaling while counting to five and then exhaling also counting to five. [6] Again, this establishes a pattern of slow, deliberate breathing designed to calm the body and emotions.

Therese J. Borchard, associate editor for *World of Psychology*, writes, “Deep breathing has become increasingly important in my recovery from depression and anxiety because I recognize that shallow breath contributes to my panic.”

I would also be remiss in not telling you about Wholetones. Wholetones is a collection of therapeutic musical tones specially designed to put you at ease and alleviate anxiety and stress. These unique melodies can help your breathing rhythms and music itself is a powerful positive stimulant. [You can listen to samples of these tunes online.](#)

As Shawna tightly gripped the armrests of her seat on the plane, she remembered her breathing techniques. With difficulty at first, she closed her eyes and began slowly and deliberately exhaling deeply while counting to five,

and then inhaling through her nose also to the count of five. Miraculously, within just a few breaths, she found herself in control again.

You don't have to wait until you have a panic attack to practice these breathing techniques. (I pray that you never have a panic attack!) We all experience fear and anxiety at times, often accompanied by that telltale shortness of breath.

Remember these breathing exercises. They can be part of a bedtime routine that promotes calmness and relaxation. This type of daily practice makes it easier to use the deep breathing technique when other situations arise. Then put them into practice when you're feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or anxious and breathe your way out of anxiety!



Sources:[1] WebMD, "Panic Disorder," February 11, 2014, <http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/mental-health-panic-disorder>. [2] David Carbonell, Ph.D. Anxiety Coach, "A Breathing Exercise to Calm Panic Attacks," July 11, 2015, <http://www.anxietycoach.com/breathingexercise.html>. [3] David Carbonell. [4] Therese J. Borchard, "3 Deep Breathing Exercises to Reduce Anxiety," World of Psychology, 28 January 2015, <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/07/22/reduce-your-anxiety-this-minute-3-different-types-of-deep-breathing/>. [5] Therese J. Borchard.[6] Therese J. Borchard.



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master's degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.



HOW TO REDUCE ANXIETY AND STRESS WITH MEDITATION

by David Kekich

Reset Your Mind and Eliminate Anxiety

Taking care of your body goes a long way towards helping you cope with anxiety.

The diet, exercise and supplementation routines mentioned in this issue of Home Cures That Work will better equip you to deal with the stresses placed on your body. A good diet and supplements help you cope with increased production of free radicals caused by stress. Exercise reduces stress and increases your cardiovascular

ability to handle stress while increasing your antioxidant potential. Do you notice how often exercise keeps popping up? Exercise and diet are paramount. If you don't like exercise, at least go out for regular brisk walks.

In addition, when faced with anxiety, make sure you get enough rest. Fatigue can definitely reduce your immune function and healing ability.

Besides exercise, many physical relaxation techniques can manage the effects of your stress. A stress management relaxation technique designed by the Institute of HeartMath has raised DHEA (your master hormone) levels by 100% and reduced the stress hormone cortisol by 23% in just one

month. Some of the best techniques are meditation and deep breathing. Did you ever notice how fast and shallow you breathe when you are stressed? It's hard to breathe deeply and feel anxious or tense at the same time. Try it.

Meditation doesn't just have to be for eastern mystics. Millions of Americans practice it, because its health benefits have been proven in many different studies. It's not an escape, as some think. Meditation is a proactive practice that can enhance your life. It's the equivalent of giving your mind an escape valve to blow off steam.

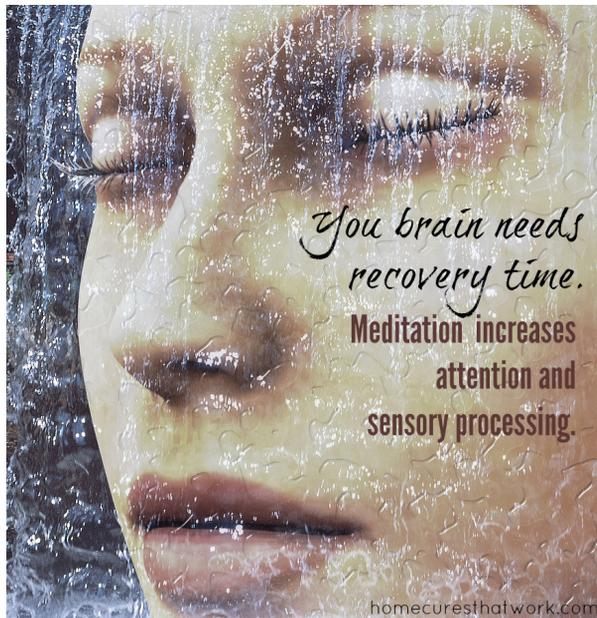
All meditation really means is to focus on one thing for an extended period of time. This allows your mind to reset

itself and stop the vicious cycle of thinking about things that stress you out.

Focus separates peak performers from average performers, possibly more than any other attribute. It also builds energy. That's why so many high profile leaders practice meditation. Meditation is anything that brings you to the moment and keeps you there. The more you meditate and focus on the "now," the stronger you grow physically, mentally and emotionally.

Mainstream medicine is now beginning to take notice of meditation's effects. For example, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), which is about 80% meditation, has been approved in Britain for use with people who have experienced three or more episodes of depression.

Your brain, just like your muscles, can be overworked, and it needs recovery time. Like many people who exercise, meditators in their mid-fifties tested twelve years biologically younger than non-meditators. Did you know meditation actually increases the thickness of your brain regions associated with attention and sensory processing? Here are some additional benefits:



Meditating...

- Increases the growth of new brain cells..
- Increases your IQ and Emotional Intelligence scores.
- Increases your comprehension and productivity.
- Improves your mental focus, memory and decision making.
- Decreases stress, anxiety and depression.
- Reduces free radicals, heart rate and biological aging.
- Slows your breathing.
- Improves quality of and ability to sleep.
- Reduces your blood pressure.
- Relaxes your muscles.
- Reduces your risk of stroke or heart attack.
- Gives your body time to eliminate lactic acid and other waste products.
- Increases blood

levels of DHEA.

- Reduces anxiety and eliminates stressful thoughts.
- Helps with clear thinking.
- Helps with focus and concentration.
- Reduces irritability.
- Accelerates weight loss.
- Reduces stress headaches.
- Enhances overall health.

Wow! Is that incredible, or what? Review this list a few times. Let the benefits sink in. Who wouldn't want better health, to think more clearly, to age more slowly and to be smarter?

The essence of meditation is to quiet your thoughts by focusing completely on just one thing. Unlike hypnosis, which is more of a passive experience, meditation is an active process that seeks to exclude outside distractions by concentrating all your thoughts on the subject of meditation.

In all cases, it helps if your body is relaxed. Get in a position that you can comfortably sustain for a period of time (20–30 minutes is ideal, but even five minutes helps a lot). If you choose, and if you are sufficiently supple, the lotus position may work best for you. Otherwise, sitting in a comfortable chair or lying on a bed may be equally effective.

A number of different focuses of concentration may be used. Which one you choose is a matter of personal taste. Some of these are detailed below:

Breathing: Focus on each breath in and out, breathing in through your nose on a count of seven, hold for a count of three, and breathe out through your mouth on a count of eight. Inhale and exhale completely, totally filling and emptying your lungs.

Focusing on an object: Completely focus on one object. Choose something pleasant and interesting, and then examine it in detail. Observe its color, shape, texture, etc.

Focus on a sound: Some people like to focus on sounds. The classic example is the Sanskrit word “Om,” meaning “perfection.”

Imagery: Create a mental image of a pleasant and relaxing place in your mind. Involve all your senses

in the imagery: see the place, hear the sounds, smell the aromas, feel the temperature and the wind.

In all cases, keep your attention focused. If external thoughts or distractions wander in, let them drift out. If necessary, visualize attaching the thoughts to objects and then move the objects out of your attention.

I do this several times a day. To demonstrate how effective this simple technique can be, I did it last evening when I felt stress over an unpleasant task. When I started, my blood pressure was 117/75. Seven minutes later, I dropped it to 97/63. That’s simply amazing! Had I not taken my stress break, I would have eroded my health, functioning sub-par and frenzied. Instead, I reduced my anxiety and jumped back into my task with renewed energy and motivation.

This is not a one-time event. I get these results regularly. Taking several anxiety-busting breaks every day could help

you avoid 80% of all medical conditions. That’s the medical profession’s conservative estimate of the toll anxiety and stress takes on you.

How often do you think what you are doing is so urgent and important that you can’t afford to take one minute off, let alone seven? Well, I’ve got news for you. The best time to take an anxiety break is when you think you don’t have the time. That’s exactly when proactive relaxation breaks are the most productive way to spend your time and reduce stress. Not only will they improve your performance, but you could avoid a nasty hospital stay, or even a premature death as a side effect.



David Kekich (Living Healthy to 120: Anti-Aging Breakthroughs) is President/CEO of Maximum Life Foundation that focuses on aging research, a 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to curing aging-related diseases. For more information, visit: www.MaxLife.org. David contributes to our column Living Healthy to 120: Anti-Aging Breakthroughs. MaxLife is helping to make the anti-aging dream a reality with cutting edge Bio-Engineering research and products.

How to **OVERCOME** *Social Anxiety* Disorder



by Rob Fischer

How to Let Go of Your Fears

Think of a time when you had to give a presentation, interview for a job you really wanted, went on your first date, or attended a meeting or event at which you knew no one. Chances are you experienced some level of anxiety preceding and during the experience.

According to the Wall Street Journal, the number one fear in America is public speaking. Along these lines, Mark Twain quipped, “There

are two types of speakers. Those who get nervous and those who are liars!”

Clearly, anxiety over high pressure social situations like speaking in public is a natural and normal response. However, many people experience significant anxiety in nearly all social contexts. They exhibit excessive, irrational behavior and fear in interactions with others. This form of anxiety is not normal and may constitute social anxiety disorder or social phobia.[1]

An estimated 19.2 million Americans suffer from social anxiety disorder.[2] In fact, social anxiety ranks as the third most prevalent psychological disorder in the country.[3]

This condition consists of feelings of uneasiness, dread, or apprehension about social

interactions. Typically, these feelings of anxiety stem from concern that one is being scrutinized and judged negatively by others—even when there’s no cause to believe this is truly the case.

The person is scared that they will be embarrassed, belittled, or humiliated in front of others. A person with social anxiety disorder may anticipate and stew over a planned encounter to the point of debilitating fear beforehand. This reaction can bring on a panic attack or prompt other irrational behavior.

The following examples usually evoke emotional distress for people with social anxiety disorder:[4]

- Meeting new people
- Being teased or criticized in public

- Finding themselves the center of attention
- Being watched while doing something
- Meeting people in authority
- Any social encounter, especially involving strangers
- Pressure to say something with others present
- Interpersonal relationships, whether friends or romantic

Symptoms of social anxiety may include:[5]

- Sweating
- Shaking
- Pounding heart
- Inability to think straight
- Being tongue tied
- Upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Flight
- Insomnia

Social anxiety disorder results from distorted thinking. this disorder, we entertain false beliefs about social situations and the negative opinions of others. Social anxiety is rooted in the fear that others are out to get us, laugh at us, or think we're dumb, fat, ugly, or ... fill in the blank. Social anxiety is emotionally draining because we're always on our guard, always suspicious, and never relax in the presence of others.

Left untreated, social anxiety disorder can severely hinder a person's normal daily routine—anything

that involves other people. [6] This could include: riding public transportation, going to work or school, work performance, attending social activities, relating with people under any circumstances, and even leaving home.

Typically, people with social anxiety disorder recognize that their behavior is irrational. But knowing that and being able to do something about are two different things.[7] People with this disorder don't like the way they respond toward others and wish they were different. This "knowing" often spawns feelings of guilt and inferiority, which exacerbate the problem.

The Causes of Social Anxiety Disorder

Biologically, social anxiety seems to run in the family.

Whether this is genetic or learned behavior is another issue. But even if you are genetically disposed does not mean that you are consigned to a future of social anxiety.[8]

Psychologically, a person may have been bullied, made fun of in the past, or experienced some other trauma that triggered social anxiety disorder.[9] These issues too can be overcome.

Environmentally, a person may observe the negative consequences of how others are treated and respond in fear to avoid such treatment themselves. Children who are overprotected by their parents and not allowed to develop social relationships with others may not learn good social skills.[10] But it is never too late to learn!

Treatment for Social Anxiety Disorder

Mainstream Drug Treatments

As is so common with Americans, we frequently reach for a pill to solve our problems. And in the case of Social Anxiety Disorder there are numerous drugs on the market prescribed to treat this disorder. Ironically, many of these drugs bear side effects common to the very issue they purportedly address! Below are two examples of drugs (Zoloft and

These Symptoms May Indicate You Have **Social Anxiety Disorder**

- Sweating
- Shaking
- Pounding heart
- Inability to think straight
- Being tongue tied
- Upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Flight
- Insomnia

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Here's how to let go of your fears...

Prozac) commonly prescribed for social anxiety disorder.[11]

Zoloft – “Common side effects of Zoloft include sleepiness, nervousness, insomnia, dizziness, nausea, skin rash, headache, diarrhea, constipation, upset stomach, stomach pain, changes in appetite, abnormal ejaculation, impotence, decreased sex drive, difficulty having an orgasm, dry mouth, and weight loss.” [12]

Prozac – “Side effects of Prozac include nausea, upset stomach, constipation, headaches, anxiety, insomnia, drowsiness, dizziness, nervousness, heart palpitations, loss of appetite or increase in appetite, weight changes, cold symptoms (stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat), dry mouth, decreased sex drive, impotence, or difficulty having an orgasm. Some patients may experience withdrawal reactions such as nausea, nervousness, and insomnia upon stopping Prozac.”[13]

Based on those side effects, one might well observe that if you didn't have social anxiety disorder before taking those drugs, you might certainly develop it after taking them!

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

The most effective treatment currently available for social

anxiety disorder is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Cognitive behavioral therapy seeks to “guide the person's thoughts in a more rational direction and help the person stop avoiding social situations that once caused anxiety. It teaches people to react differently to the situations that trigger their anxiety symptoms.”[14]

A primary goal of CBT is training you to be your own therapist. In this regard, there are a number of self-guided manuals available. Many people with social anxiety disorder are making great progress by following the book, *The Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook: Proven Step-by-Step Techniques for Overcoming Your Fear* by Martin M. Antony, Ph.D., and Richard P. Swinson, M.D.[15]

Meditation

You can also begin to transform your mind and thoughts away from anxiety by reading and meditating on Scripture. God designed us for relationship with Him and with others. You were made for relationships. By meditating on what He says about relationships and implementing those principles into our lives, we can overcome many of our social difficulties.

Also, He knows us intimately— even better than we know ourselves. In addition to that,

He loves us unconditionally, so we can trust Him implicitly. Because He knows us so well and loves us so much, in the Bible He has given us instructions, examples, and encouragement on how we can interact with others in a healthy manner.

For instance, check out the following passages regarding our relationship with God and others:

- Psalm 139:1-4, “You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.”
- Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- Matthew 10:28, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.”
- Romans 12:10, 16, “Be devoted to one another in love. Live in harmony with one another.”
- Philippians 4:6-8, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of

God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things”.[16]

Ask God to help you with your response toward others. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7) Because God has not made us timid and fearful of others, we can depend on Him to help us overcome this problem.

Whatever anxiety or discouragement we might have about our relationships there is always more growth, peace, and blessing that God’s grace can bring.

Additional Anxiety Help

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Other positive steps you can take that may help you overcome social anxiety disorder include:

- Getting plenty of rest
- Eating nutritiously
- Exercising regularly (see Rob’s article)
- Applying music and chroma (light) therapy.

All of these solutions are important for squelching anxiety and achieving peace and joy in your life.

When I was 12 years old, I recognized that I was painfully shy. I knew that I didn’t want to be that way. So, I asked my parents to send me away to camp for a week, knowing that it would push me out of my comfort zone. I went, not knowing another soul there!

My camp experience had the desired effect. Because no one there knew me, I started all my relationships with a clean slate. I began to relate with others—even strangers—

in ways I had not formerly tried. It opened my horizons and changed me profoundly.

How about you? What steps will you take from those provided above to reach out to others and turn a phobia into a pleasure in which you’re able to truly enjoy the company of others?



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master’s degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.



A 60 Second Solution to Panic Attacks...

I just stumbled upon this recently and absolutely LOVED the video presentation. After taking a closer look, I could absolutely relate to this guy's description of anxiety and panic. And you totally will, too. If you're looking to pick up an amazing technique that can shift your negative

focus and snap you out of your next panic attack within 60 seconds - yes, just a single minute - [then be sure to watch this right now before it's taken down.](#)

As always, watching this video won't be enough. You've got to dig in your heels and practice this technique consistently

for at least three days.

Once you do, though - WHOA! You'll notice a big difference in your ability to transform any anxiety-inducing situation into a feeling of tranquility and inner confidence.

Seriously - this is not voodoo. It's like learning karate for your panic, anxiety, worry and fear. Fight back!

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