

# Help with Anxiety

## 1. Stand up straight

According to Tamar Chansky, Ph.D., psychologist and author of *Freeing Yourself from Anxiety*, "When we are anxious, we protect our upper body -- where our heart and lungs are located -- by hunching over."

For immediate relief from anxiety, stand up, pull your shoulders back, plant your feet evenly and widely apart, and open your chest. Then breathe deeply. This posture, combined with deep breathing, helps your body remember that it's not in danger right now, and that it is in control (not helpless). If you can't stand up (i.e. you're in your car), just pull your shoulders back and open up your chest. The most important thing is to stop hunching and breathe deeply.

## 2. Play the 5-5-5 game

When you're anxious, you're often caught in a (negative) thought loop. Play this to get back into your body and stop anxiety fast:

- Look around and name 5 things you can see.
- List 5 sounds you can hear.
- Move 5 parts of your body you can feel (i.e. rotate your ankle, wiggle your ears, nod your head up and down).

It might sound silly, but this works.

## 3. Sniff lavender oil

Lavender oil has a lot of healing properties. It promotes a feeling of calm and supports deep, restful sleep. It can even help with headaches.

To help reduce anxiety, keep a bottle of lavender oil at your desk (or in purse if you have one). Breathe it in and/or massage it into your temples when you need a boost of peace. Bonus points for combining the sniffing with deep, even breaths.

## 4. Watch a funny video

Yes, really. Watching a clip of your favourite comedian or blooper show will help you stop feeling anxious fast. Why? Because you can't laugh and stay anxious at the same time, physiologically. Your body relaxes after a bout of laughter in a way that gets rid of anxiety. Plus, according to the Mayo Clinic, laughter brings in oxygen-rich air, which stimulates your heart and lungs, and spikes your endorphins.

Endorphins are chemicals produced by the body to relieve stress and pain. They work similarly to a class of drugs called opioids. Opioids relieve pain and can produce a feeling of euphoria. They are sometimes prescribed for short-term use after surgery or for pain-relief.

### 5. Go for a brisk walk

Exercise is a long-proven way to lower anxiety. In addition to boosting your level of feel-good neurotransmitters, a brisk walk clears your mind and gets you breathing more deeply again--and anxiety is intimately linked to shallow breathing.

Studies also show that people who exercise vigorously on a regular basis are 25 percent less likely to develop an anxiety disorder.

### 6. Accept your anxiety

This may sound counterintuitive, but Chansky says accepting your anxiety (instead of feeling ashamed or frustrated by it) will actually help you feel less anxious.

It doesn't matter whether you inherited your anxiety from your family or your lifestyle, or both. It's here now, and acknowledging that instead of fighting it frees you up to learn how to manage it. Accepting it doesn't mean giving up, either. It means you stop spending energy criticising yourself for being anxious and instead learn what works for you when it comes to self-soothing.

### 7. Listen to the most relaxing song in the world

This song was engineered specifically to calm your nervous system. It was found to reduce anxiety by up to 65 percent.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfcAVejslrU>

### 8. Re-label what's happening.

If you're having a panic attack and your heart is racing, it's easy to believe something like, "I'm going to die." Instead of buying into this inaccurate thought, re-label it. Remind yourself: "This is a panic attack. I've had them before and they don't actually kill me; they pass. This will also pass, and there's nothing I need to do."

In actuality, panic attacks are an activation of the body's fight-or-flight response, which doesn't kill you--it keeps you alive.

### 9. Do something

Do anything. Clear a few things off your desk. Walk over to the kitchen and get yourself a glass of water. Walk outside and find a flower to smell--it doesn't matter. Doing an action interrupts your thought pattern, which is often where anxiety starts.

## Anxiety Apps

### Clear fear:

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.org.stem4.clearfear&hl=en\\_GB&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.org.stem4.clearfear&hl=en_GB&gl=US)

Clear Fear provides you with a range of ways to manage anxiety.

Developed by a clinician co-collaboratively with young people, Clear Fear uses a Cognitive Behavioural framework to help you change anxious thoughts and emotions, alter anxious behaviours and calm fear responses.

### Calm:

[https://www.calm.com/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjoq6iJrY8AIVF5ftCh1QxgNFEAAYASAAEgIxF\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.calm.com/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjoq6iJrY8AIVF5ftCh1QxgNFEAAYASAAEgIxF_D_BwE)

Calm Is an App For sleep, Meditation and Relaxation.

### Headspace:

[https://www.headspace.com/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIkIb6spvY8AIVw-R3Ch1Opg7nEAAYASAAEgI5S\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.headspace.com/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIkIb6spvY8AIVw-R3Ch1Opg7nEAAYASAAEgI5S_D_BwE)

This is another app for sleep, meditation and relaxation through mindfulness.

### Anna Freud website

This website a great deal of information and ideas, well worth a visit.

I highly recommend it.

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>