

Anxiety Management Strategies

When anxiety becomes part of your daily experience or starts affecting work or home life, it can be a sign that some supportive strategies may help.

The trick is to become aware of your thoughts. This can be difficult at first, as they happen so quickly that you are often unaware of them. So try this. Next time you feel that knot in your stomach or tightness in your chest, stop and ask yourself, 'What am I thinking?'

Chances are you are thinking something negative like:

- 'I won't be able to handle this'
- 'I can't cope', or
- 'What if...'

Replace any negative thoughts with more selfsupporting statements such as:

- 'I will handle this'
- 'This is just anxiety — I'm not going to let it get to me'
- 'I don't need these thoughts — I can think differently', and
- 'I can be anxious and still deal with this'.

Take back the control of your anxiety by refusing to believe your thoughts. Ask yourself:

- What is the evidence that supports this idea?
- What is the evidence against this idea?
- Is what I'm thinking true?
- Is there another way of looking at this?
- What is the worst that could happen? Could I live through it?
- What is the best that could happen?
- What is the most realistic outcome?
- What is the effect of me believing this thought, is this thought helping me?
- What could be the effect of changing my thinking?
- What would I tell a friend if they were in the same situation?

A small dose of anxiety is normal but if it's affecting your work and personal life, it's time to take charge. Practice these tips and don't let anxiety dictate your day.

- Look at your self-talk. How can you look at things another way? Start turning negative thinking into positive feedback.
- Use positive self-statements such as 'This isn't pleasant, but I can handle it', 'This is just anxiety — I'm not going to let it get to me', 'These are just thoughts — not reality' and 'I can be anxious and still deal with this situation'.
- Practice regular relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga and progressive muscle relaxation.
- Apply problem-solving techniques to brainstorm alternative strategies to deal with the situation you are worried about.
- Set aside a dedicated 10–15 minute window each day to focus on your worries. When worries arise during the day, note them down and remind yourself, 'I'll think about this during worry time.' During the scheduled time, review the list and decide: Is this something I can take action on, plan for, or let go of?

Approach rather than avoid. When we feel anxious, our natural instinct is to avoid the thing causing discomfort. Maybe that's a task, a conversation, a situation, or a decision. Avoidance can bring momentary relief, but it reinforces anxiety long term. Gradually and gently approaching the situation, in small, manageable steps, teaches your brain that it may be uncomfortable, but not dangerous, and builds confidence in coping.

We're here to help. Converge offers 24-hour, 7 day a week counselling support. Contact us via the Converge App, our website or phone - it's easy!



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