

Ways to Manage Anxiety

Anxiety can be difficult to manage, and simply telling yourself to stop worrying or calm down doesn't always help. Sometimes trying too hard to push anxious feelings away can make it even harder to understand what you're experiencing.

Instead, try recognizing the anxiety and exploring different ways to respond to it. Pay attention to what you're thinking, what you're feeling emotionally, and how your body responds. Different techniques may work at different times, and what helps one person may not be as helpful for another.

The following ten approaches offer different ways to respond when anxiety appears. Try the ones that feel appropriate for you and take some time to notice which techniques help you manage your anxiety best.

1. **Recognize What You're Feeling**

Notice and name the anxiety rather than immediately trying to push it aside.

2. **Get Curious About It**

Ask, what is happening, what you're thinking, and what might be contributing to the feeling. Where in your body are you feeling it.

3. **Separate Yourself From the Anxious Thoughts**

Recognize that an anxious thought is something you're experiencing; it doesn't have to define you.

4. **Move Your Body**

Stretch, shake out your arms, walk around, or use another comfortable movement to redirect some of that physical tension.

5. **Reconnect With Your Senses**

Pay attention to what you can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste around you.

6. **Use More Active Movement**

When sitting still feels difficult, a safe physical activity can give that restless energy somewhere to go.

7. **Give Other Emotions Some Space**

Consider whether frustration, anger, fear, sadness, or another feeling is underneath the anxiety.

8. **Approach Instead of Always Avoiding**

This technique is best practiced with the support of a counselor or other qualified professional.

Facing something that causes anxiety can bring up strong or uncomfortable emotional responses, especially when the fear is connected to difficult past experiences. With appropriate support, gradually approaching something you normally avoid can help you explore your anxiety rather than continually avoiding what triggers it.

9. **Allow the Feeling to Be Present**

Give yourself time to experience the feeling without immediately demanding that it disappear.

10. **Write It Out**

Journal about what happened, what you felt, what you noticed in your body, what thoughts came up, and what helped.