

4 Effective Proven Ways to Reduce Your Anxiety!!

Don't Wait for Your Anxiety to Fade

Your anxiety is likely wired in as part of your temperament and won't just vanish on its own. Most of our brains are hard-wired to not like uncertainty, unpredictability, and change—and some of us are just anxiety-prone by nature. However, when you take action towards your goals *despite* your anxiety—and then actually survive the experience—your brain begins to label uncertainty as less dangerous. Over time, you build a sense of being certain and secure about yourself—you begin to see yourself as someone who can take action and be successful even when you're feeling anxious.

1. Set a Realistic Goal

We don't all want (or need) to be doctors, lawyers, or to have hundreds of friends, or run marathons, be super-skinny, or live in a mansion. Anxiety makes you see yourself as less talented, lovable or competent than others and - when you think of moving forward and - if you don't really know yourself, you may set a goal to be just like a friend or neighbor—to do what appears socially acceptable or what it seems others expect of you. It's hard to remain committed and follow through on difficult long-term goals, especially if you're not really passionate about the activity. Rather than thinking about what you "should" be doing, take a look inside and ask yourself what you really *want*. Perhaps you are a creative person, or want to travel, have life balance, live healthier, or find a caring partner. Whatever it is, figure out the easiest thing you can do to get started. Phrase your goal specifically, for example *"I'll walk for 20 minutes three times next week."* You can't climb a mountain all at once and you're more likely to achieve your goal with *intrinsic* (coming from the inside) motivation than when you're just trying to please others.

2. Trust in the Process

As Martin Luther King Jr. said, *"Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase."* However, even if you don't have faith to begin with - faith will come if you just take that first step. The more you take action, the more likely you are to have some success and begin to trust yourself, the process, and the universe. I often start writing a blog post not knowing exactly what I'm going to say. I've learned that if I have a genuine intention to help others and a message to share, then the content will emerge. As many writers will tell you, if you just *start writing*, the ideas will form and your "masterpiece" will take shape over time, and as a result the anxiety diminishes and you're left with your story to tell or your genuine passion for the ideas you want to express. The same applies to other aspects of life—starting a new job, launching a project, seeking a relationship, etc.

3. Curb the Catastrophizing

Anxious people tend to focus on what could go wrong and on how bad it would be if they took a risk and got a negative outcome. For Example: What if you went on a date and the person turned out to be a jerk—or they were great, but they never called you back? What if you invested in a new business and it didn't work out, or if you applied for a job and didn't get it? What if you changed jobs because you were miserable and found yourself in a worse situation? While you wouldn't want these outcomes, how bad are they really? Couldn't you survive them? Do you have coping skills you could draw on, or could you just try again and take a different approach next time? I'll bet you could!! Anxiety makes you overestimate the risks of taking action, but what are the risks of staying stuck in a bad situation? You could eventually regret even more - not even trying to go after your dream.

4. Be Your Own Cheerleader, Not Your Critic

Going after your dreams is tough and you will inevitably face obstacles and failures along the way. But you don't need to make these barriers worse by beating up on yourself every time you try something that doesn't turn out perfectly. Many of life's important outcomes have an element of uncertainty. However, we can control what we think and do, but we can't control market forces or what other people decide. You may speak up for yourself and get criticism and pushback, but that doesn't necessarily mean you've done something wrong. Our brains naturally go to the negative, because our brains are *protection-focused*, rather than promotion-focused. To overcome this bias, you need to deliberately focus on the positives in any given situation. Honor yourself for taking a risk, acknowledge and allow your discomfort, and acknowledge to yourself for just showing up when you really wanted to curl up on the couch at home. You can't control the outcomes. However, you can control how you think and perceive situations, so praise yourself for putting in the effort and you'll continue to stay motivated!!

Getting rid of your anxiety is challenging, but not impossible!! You can choose to move ahead and take constructive action despite your anxiety, building resilience and self-confidence along the way, and opening up new possibilities for a productive and meaningful life. It isn't easy at first, but it is definitely worth the effort. With focus, consistency and time it can get easier and easier to curb your anxiety.