

12 Ways Out of Anxiety

by Silvia Purdie

Anxiety Checklist:

- I think about the same things over and over!
- My gut feels yuck.
- It's bloody hard to sleep.
- It just feels really awful, like acid in my blood.
- I'm having headaches or shoulder pain.
- I snap at people (then feel bad about it).
- I'm exhausted.
- I can't concentrate.

1: SELF-CARE

Anxiety tells us that our problems matter more than we do. It helps to attend to self-care.

- What feels soothing for you?
- What restores your energy?

2: MOVE

Anxiety is tension. It helps to move your body: stretch, walk, shake, dance.

- Notice your breathing. Slow the breaths down.
- Do yoga.
- Get a massage.

3: SLEEP

Anxiety is the anti-sleep drug. It helps to

- a) accept that you won't sleep well at the moment and that's OK,
- b) plan the time before bed to be as relaxing as possible,
- c) find things to do when you are awake in the night that don't fuel the stress,
- d) rest during the day,
- e) take sleeping medication, magnesium, etc. – what works for you.

4: REALITY

Anxiety is fueled by a negative mind-warp that makes risks look bigger. It helps to do a 'reality check'.

- Notice 3 colours, 3 sounds and 3 sensations right now.
- Name 5 things you are grateful for.
- Talk about your fears with someone you trust and check your perceptions of risk.

5: SUPPORT

Anxiety reveals how our needs are not being met. It helps to know and ask for what you need.

- In what ways do you feel unsupported?
- What might you ask for? from whom?

6: SHARE

Anxiety is lonely. It helps to talk to people who listen well.

- Think of someone you know who helps you feel heard, and reach out.
- Access a counsellor or therapist (maybe through EAP at work, or through church, or you might have to pay for this yourself).

7: EMOTIONS

Anxiety tangles fear with lots of other feelings. It helps to see more clearly what you are really hurt or frustrated, sad or mad about.

- Notice the range of emotions going on inside you.
- Journal or doodle to get out on paper what you are feeling.
- Talk to a professional.

8: SCRIPTS

Anxiety reveals our core beliefs, that may be past their 'use-by-date'. It helps to dig out and re-write old life scripts.

- What do you believe about your role and your value?
- What script did your parents (and other in your childhood) write for you?
- How do you want your life to be??

9: ENDURE

Anxiety is very unpleasant but you will get through. Hang on and wait it out.

- Try not to get stressed about feeling stressed.

10: STRATEGY

Anxiety traps us in tight loops of stuckness. It helps to make plans for small chunks of time for practical ways to address the problems you face constructively.

- How far ahead can I plan right now?
- What are a couple of specific things I will commit to do that will give me a sense of accomplishment?

11: SPIRIT

Anxiety is a spirit of fear. It helps to release the flow of the spirit of grace and peace.

- Make space to sit and be still.
- Relax in a natural environment each day.
- Connect with a faith community.

12: STRENGTHS

The symptoms of anxiety are fairly universal, but your solution will be unique, based on your strengths, personality, situation and hopes.

- What do you value in yourself?
- How will these strengths help you to overcome anxiety?

