

# Anxious and Worried?

Take control over your anxiety



## Anxiety

Everyone worries or feels anxious at times, and these are normal emotions to feel in stressful situations. Sometimes though you may feel anxious even after the situation has passed, and the constant worry can negatively affect your life and relationships, and may feel overwhelming.

If you know that your anxiety is associated with a traumatic experience, perhaps one that has made you feel threatened or helpless and if your feelings do not improve over a month or more, you should get help as soon as possible.

## Symptoms may include

- Feeling nervous, or tense
- Racing thoughts
- Feeling that something bad might happen
- Short of breath, heart racing
- Trouble relaxing or enjoying
- Irritable or easily annoyed

## Top tips

- **Talk to someone**  
Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or professional counsellor about your anxiety. Talking with someone and supporting others is much better than being isolated
- **Relax**  
Find a way to relax by focusing on your breathing, or spending time on a hobby.
- **Spend time in nature**  
Go for a walk, find a park, study a tree or a flower.
- **Challenge negative thoughts**  
Pay attention to what your brain is saying. Is it thinking the worst? Can you be more realistic about what might actually happen?
- **Have good health habits**  
30 minutes of light exercise several times a week can go a long way to help you feel less anxious.
- **Have a plan**  
Keep in mind ways that you know work to calm you down. Count slowly to 10, make a hot drink, go for a walk, or play with a pet.

## Further help

Ask your doctor for advice or seek help from a counselling service.

## More on managing anxiety

### Talk therapy

Professional counsellors may be able to do more than help you with your symptoms of anxiety. They will be able to help you challenge your underlying beliefs that may be holding you in a negative thought-cycle. In a safe counselling space, you can explore where your thoughts came from, perhaps from a way of thinking you learned as a child. You can learn new, more positive and healthy ways to look at things. You may be reminded that uncertainty is a normal part of life, and that you cannot control everything that happens around you.

### Relaxation

Anxiety may cause your body and mind to be in a constant state of stress which may impact your physical and mental health. Plan to include regular stress-relief in your life. For example slow, deep breathing, meditation, and stretching exercises. Reading and watching something amusing is also good for relief and may shift you to a mind-set that allows you to think more calmly.

### Challenge negative thoughts

Once you are able to monitor your thoughts without engaging in them, you can then evaluate what is going on. Look for evidence to support your negative thoughts, and also for evidence against them. Practice more realistic thinking by weighing up the

best possible outcome and the worst possible outcome to find the most likely outcome.

### Good health habits

A healthy and balanced lifestyle can support you to manage your symptoms of anxiety. Eat regularly to avoid spikes in blood sugar and cravings, and eat foods that help stabilise your mood, like whole grains, vegetables, fish and nuts. Cut back on caffeine, which may be increasing your anxiety and affecting your sleep. Exercise regularly to relieve stress and tension, and to boost your physical and mental energy. Incorporating 30 minutes of exercise (e.g. walking) per day helps our bodies to rebalance. Keep a regular healthy sleep cycle.

### Keep in touch

Make an effort to spend time with people you trust, who are positive and caring, so that you are able to share your anxieties, and be supported.

### Further help

If you have tried many of these ideas and are still experiencing anxiety, get help from a counselling service, or ask advice from your doctor.

