

## Anxiety and Panic Attacks

Included are some suggestions in addressing symptoms for Anxiety and panic attacks. One approach in and of itself may not be the answer, but a combination of some of these approaches might be able to significantly reduce the discomfort that you are experiencing .

### **Prevalence Data for Anxiety Disorders**

#### Simple Phobic

A. Most common form of psycho pathology - an estimated 19-23% lifetime prevalence rate.

#### Social Phobia

A. 2% of population have social phobia.  
B. 40% of population consider themselves to be shy and 90% of the population admit to at least one period of difficulty of shyness.

#### Panic Disorder

A. Panic disorder with agoraphobia occurs in 2.5-5.7% of the population.  
B. Panic disorder without agoraphobia occurs in .6-1.0% of the population.  
C. Woman are two times more likely to be agoraphobic than men.  
D. Men with panic disorder are more likely to abuse alcohol than are woman.  
E. 34% of the general population have a panic attack within a 1 year period: 85% have 5 or more panic attacks within a year period.

### 1. AWARENESS OF SYMPTOMS

By keeping track of your symptoms and their severity over time, this can help gauge your progress in treatment. Keeping a journal will help you record what your thoughts and feelings are in given situations. In time, you may be able to identify patterns to your episodes. Often, these written records can provide a broader perspective of your progress during those times you may be experiencing difficult periods in your recovery. It is then easier to understand the connection between thoughts and actions\feelings. These records, will also be excellent resources for you at later dates in your life if these symptoms resurface.

### 2. ASSERTIVENESS

Improving assertiveness skills takes both education and practice. In practicing assertiveness skills, It is important to know that positive change doesn't always come easy or without some discomfort. The benefits towards change include greater confidence in yourself and your abilities, increased trust in relationships, and a healthier sense of boundaries.

### 3. NUTRITION

Significant progress has been made in investigating how nutrition can influence mood and behavior. Caffeine is a nervous system stimulant which may increase anxiety symptoms. In addition to reducing or eliminating caffeine, anxiety may be reduced by eating less processed and sugary foods which tend to deplete the body's energy reserves in the long run. Eating food high in complex carbohydrates can help to calm the mind and the body by increasing levels of serotonin. Consider the use of vitamins and mineral supplements. Your doctor or other trained professionals can assist you in making healthy nutritional choices.

### 4. EDUCATION

Individuals can learn about the treatment of anxiety, stress, and panic attacks from doctors, therapists, books, the Internet, and peers. Knowledge can be empowering and reduce anxiety because individuals better understand their symptoms.

#### 5. REGULAR RELAXATION

During anxiety and panic attacks, the sympathetic branch of the nervous system is active. The regular practice of relaxation can help you to over-learn the relaxation response so that it will become more dominant than the anxiety and panic response. During relaxation, heart rate and blood pressure tend to decrease as well as other changes which help to decrease the sympathetic activity and increase parasympathetic activity of the autonomic nervous system.

#### 6. EXERCISE

Exercise can help to disrupt the cycle of anxiety, depression, and fatigue. The body becomes better able to handle the effects of physical and emotional stress. Many find that going for walk, especially in the morning, can help to reduce the symptoms of generalized anxiety.

#### 7. SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

There is an increasing correlation between supportive relationships and health. Relationships provide a well needed stress buffer and help fulfill a very important human need. Often being with others helps balance the focus between oneself and others.

#### 8. MEDICATION

Medication can help stabilization of function and create opportunities for other aspects of treatment to be beneficial. Medication is often utilized when there is significant impairment in day to day functioning. Because each person differs biologically and psychologically, it is imperative to discuss the use of medication with your doctor.

#### 9. RATIONAL THOUGHTS

Thoughts play a key role in influencing feelings and behavior. Cognitive restructuring can assist you in learning how to change often predictable and self defeating thoughts. Through increased awareness and practice, unrealistic thought patterns can be replaced with more rational ones. These self enhancing thoughts often play a role in transforming behavior responses with reduced anxiety.

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## *Information* *About* *Anxiety* *&* *Panic Attacks*

Information about Anxiety,  
Stress, and Panic Disorders and  
reduction of symptoms.