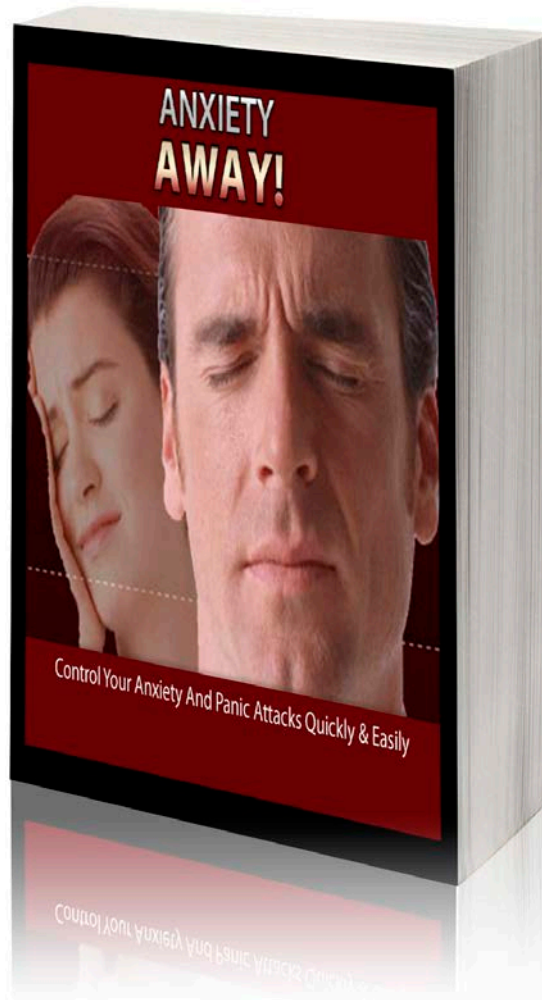


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Introduction

Almost all of us feel anxious now and again, usually when we find a situation daunting or frightening and feel that we will be unable to cope with it.

This might happen when we have to attend a big social event, give a presentation at work or go for an important interview but generally our anxiety drops away fairly quickly. That's because the situation is only temporary and we know it will soon be over.

This kind of anxiety is manageable because we know it is only short-term and that we can handle the physical, mental and emotional discomfort that comes along with it.

Some people, however, find it unbearable and impossible to manage. For them, anxiety has become a problem.

These people experience acute anxiety on a daily basis even when that anxiety is not based upon reality. They find it impossible to lead a normal life thanks to the very real symptoms that anxiety causes and often become isolated and depressed.

Sometimes, their anxiety reaches such a level that they feel they cannot cope any more, often believing that they will never be able to rid themselves of this debilitating disorder.

If you are experiencing this kind of daily anxiety, or if you suffer from intermittent episodes of anxiety that interfere with your daily life, then it is likely that you are suffering from an anxiety or panic disorder.

At this point, I urge you not to worry or feel even more anxious. You are in the right place to get all the good information you need to overcome this crippling condition once and for all.

One important thing to remember is that you are not alone – anxiety is the most common mental disorder in the United States with over 19 million adults (that's around 13% of the population) affected at any one time.

Anxiety disorders cost the US over \$42 million dollars a year and sufferers are three to five times more likely to go to the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized.

But don't worry about those statistics because, by investing in this program, you have taken the first, most important step in overcoming your anxiety disorder. Anxiety Away will show you how to understand

what is going on mentally, physically and emotionally when you experience an anxiety attack. It will teach you what symptoms to look for and how to deal with these so that you break the vicious circle of anxiety forever.

Anxiety Away will hold your hand through the process of acquiring the simple skills and techniques you can use to control your anxiety. In just a few short minutes a day you will discover how to deal with your physical, emotional, mental and behavioral symptoms on a permanent basis.

All you need do is settle down and start reading. It is a good idea to keep a pen and paper to hand as there are a number of interactive exercises in this book. You will also find it helpful to keep an Anxiety Diary to record your progress through this program.

And believe me – there will be rapid progress because you are now just steps away from achieving that dream of an anxiety-free life.

Take The Anxiety Test

The first thing I would like you to do is to take a few moments to check if you are suffering from an anxiety disorder. Simply complete the following quick quiz:

In order to check out whether you may be suffering from anxiety, place a tick next to those symptoms you experience regularly:

How you feel

- Anxious, nervous, worried, frightened
- Feeling, something dreadful is going to happen
- Tense, stressed, uptight, on edge, unsettled
- Unreal, strange, woozy, detached
- Panicky

How you think

- Constant worrying
- Can't concentrate
- Thoughts racing
- Mind jumping from one thing to another
- Imagining the worst and deliberating on it

What happens to your body

- Heart pounds, races, skips a beat
- Chest feels tight or painful
- Tingling or numbness in toes or fingers
- Stomach churning or "butterflies"
- Having to go to the toilet
- Feeling jumpy or restless
- Tense muscles
- Body aching
- Sweating
- Breathing changes
- Dizzy, light headed

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Common thoughts

- "I'm losing control"
- "I'm cracking up"
- "I'm going to faint"
- "My legs are going to collapse"
- "I'm going to have a heart attack"
- "I'm going to make a fool of myself"
- "I can't cope"
- "I've got to get out"

What you do

- Pace up and down
- Start jobs and not finish
- Can't sit and relax
- On the go all of the time
- Talk quickly or more than usual
- Snappy and irritable behaviour
- Drinking more
- Smoke more
- Eat more (or less)
- Avoid feared situations

If you are regularly experiencing some or all of these symptoms, then it is likely that you are suffering from anxiety.

When Is Anxiety A Disorder?

Anxiety is classified as a disorder when it becomes chronic, obsessive and overwhelming. If you are suffering from anxiety, it will affect you in at least four different ways:

- The way you think
- The way you feel
- The way your body works
- The way you behave

Anxiety can affect you in very real, physical ways. Some of the physical symptoms of anxiety include:

- Feeling nervous, anxious or frightened
 - Sweating
 - Shortness of breath
 - Increased heart rate
 - Trembling
 - Muscle tension
 - Feeling nauseous
 - Feeling dizzy or light-headed
 - Dry mouth
-

- Tingling or prickling in hands and feet
- Vision problems
- Butterflies or churning in the stomach
- Tight or knotted feeling in the chest

Some of the emotional symptoms of anxiety include:

- Dreaminess
- Tiredness
- Nightmares or bad dreams
- Depersonalization (feeling removed from yourself)
- Derealization (feeling as if you are in a nightmare or dream)
- Depressive thoughts
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, obsessive thoughts or compulsions
- Thoughts of a sexual or violent nature. Inappropriate thoughts about people you love, sometimes of a violent or sexual nature.
- Increased violence/aggression
- Mood swings
- Inability to love/ inability to care for others
- Agoraphobia, social phobia, shyness
- Feeling like you can't cope
- Disinterest in life

The mental symptoms of anxiety can cross over with the emotional symptoms and include:

- Thinking that you may be losing your mind
- Thinking that you can't cope
- Thinking that you may be having a heart attack
- Feeling that you are losing control
- Worrying that you may be faint or sick
- Thinking that there may be something wrong with your brain (for example, a tumor)
- Worrying that people are looking at you and thinking that you might be acting strangely
- Worrying that you might be making a fool of yourself or doing or saying something silly
- Wanting to escape and get to a safe place

While the behavioral symptoms include:

- Making excuses to avoid going out or doing something
 - Only going to quiet places or being in very small groups
 - Only going to places where you can get lost in a crowd and avoid being alone with people
 - Crossing the street to avoid people
-

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- Rushing out of places or situations when feeling anxious
- Going to the toilet to escape from things
- Not saying anything when with other people
- Talking all the time to avoid feeling uncomfortable
- Using 'props' before you go out such as alcohol or drugs
- Sitting near the doors in buildings or at the end of rows or as far back as possible

Although these symptoms are actually entirely normal they can be very distressing for anyone suffering from them. It is when we feel that we cannot control these or the other mental, emotional and behavioral symptoms of anxiety that we move from experiencing normal levels of anxiety to suffering from an anxiety disorder.

The Different Kinds Of Anxiety Disorder

Anxiety can take many forms and has been classified into a number of specific disorders. Some people suffer from only one of these disorders while others from a number of them.

They include:

Panic Disorder

Women are twice as likely to suffer from panic disorder as men. Panic disorder often co-exists alongside major depression and around 2.4 million Americans each year are diagnosed with it. Sufferers experience frequent episodes of intense panic that happen without warning.

Panic disorder usually begins between late adolescence and your mid-thirties. As well as coinciding with major depression, it can occur at the same time as social phobia (see below) or generalized anxiety disorder (see below).

Symptoms include:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Depersonalization or derealisation (feeling removed from yourself or as if you are in a dream)
- Dizziness, light-headedness, faintness, or feeling of unsteadiness
- Fear of dying
- Fear of going crazy or losing control
- Hot flashes or chills
- Nausea or abdominal discomfort
- Numbness or tingling sensations
- Palpitations or racing heart
- Feeling as if you are choking
- Feeling short of breath or as if you are being smothered
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking

If you have experienced four or more of these episodes in one month then you may be diagnosed as suffering from panic disorder.

Also remember that true panic attacks generally last for only around ten minutes. If you find that your symptoms last significantly longer

than this then you should consult your doctor as it is likely there is some other cause.

Phobias

A phobia is an irrational fear of an object, situation or activity. There are three basic types of phobias:

- Specific – fear of a specific object
- Social – fear of social situations
- Agoraphobia – fear of being trapped in a place or situation

Specific phobias

These are sometimes called simple phobias and often start in childhood, going away with time. Those that continue into adulthood rarely disappear without treatment.

The irrational fear is of a specific object, some of the more common being:

Acrophobia - Fear of heights

Arachnophobia - Fear of spiders

Asterophobia - Fear of thunder

Ceraunophobia - Fear of lightning

Claustrophobia - Fear of enclosed spaces

Hydrophobia - Fear of water

Mysophobia- Fear of dirt, germs

Ophidiophobia - Fear of snakes

Nyctophobia - Fear of darkness

Pyrophobia - Fear of fire

Xenophobia- Fear of foreigners or strangers

Zoophobia- Fear of animals

Social Phobia

Social phobia is an intense, irrational fear of public humiliation or embarrassment. Sufferers avoid any situation in which they feel there is a risk of this happening. Examples include:

- Public speaking (the number one social phobia)
- Parties
- Talking to strangers
- Eating in public
- Asking someone for a date

Agoraphobia

Agoraphobia is a fear of being trapped in an inescapable place or situation, usually when alone and in public. Agoraphobia often occurs after panic attacks because the sufferer then avoids the place where the panic attack took place, fearing that there is something about the location that caused it.

The fear of having another embarrassing panic attack can also stop the sufferer from going out in public. Agoraphobia can, however, occur without panic disorder. Agoraphobics feel:

- Trapped with no way to escape (or little chance of escape)
- Embarrassed by their symptoms or helpless when dealing with them
- Afraid that they will not be able to control or look after themselves if there is no-one around to help

Symptoms of phobias include:

- Anxiety
 - Rapid heartbeat
 - Sweating
 - Hot or cold flashes
-

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- Choking, smothering feelings
- Shaking
- Dizziness, faintness
- The need to flee the situation
- Panic attacks

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (or OCD) is equally common among men and women. More than 3 million adult Americans are afflicted every year by this condition, with one third of sufferers experiencing their first symptoms during childhood.

People who suffer from OCD are unable to control their obsessive, often repetitive thoughts or behavior. These can include:

- Obsessive hoarding
- Paranoia
- Obsessive cleanliness/tidiness
- Obsessive checking
- Compulsive buying
- Obsessive praying and/or confessing
- Repeatedly performing tasks

To outsiders, many of the obsessive actions performed by OCD sufferers might seem like weird or bizarre rituals but they are, in fact, coping mechanisms.

Sufferers feel like they have to perform these rituals to get through their daily lives despite the distress it often causes to them and the people around them. The amount of time these rituals can take up

only adds to the debilitating effect of OCD on its sufferers and those close to them.

Added to the obsessive actions are the negative thoughts which plague sufferers, causing persistent anxiety. These thoughts can also take the form of images and impulses, with OCD sufferers spending considerable amounts of time trying and failing to banish them from their minds. This, in turn, leads to more anxiety and distress which only makes the symptoms worse.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) usually occur immediately after the sufferer has witnessed or experienced a highly traumatic event. In a minority of cases (less than 15%), however, the condition can develop months or even years later.

Most people who witness a traumatic event experience some of the symptoms of PTSD but the severity of these symptoms varies widely. They can include:

- Re-experiencing the trauma in the form of nightmares or flashbacks
- Anger, guilt and/or shame
- Avoidance – trying to avoid situations or people that might remind the sufferer of the original event
- Hypervigilance – being constantly aware of possible threats and/or easily startled
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Seeming withdrawn
- Depression, anxiety and phobias
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Unexplained physical symptoms including sweating, dizziness, chest pains and stomach upsets

As with many other anxiety disorders, PTSD can lead to the breakdown of relationships or problems at work.

PTSD is most often associated with ex-servicemen and women but anyone who has suffered an overwhelming life event, or witnessed one, can develop the condition, as can those close to someone who has suffered such a trauma.

If you develop PTSD, or someone close to you does, it is important to seek help as soon as possible.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is experienced by 3-4% of people at some point during their lives. It is characterized by excessive worry or anxiety over everyday events with concerns about health, money, family and work being the most common.

People with GAD constantly expect the worst to happen even when there is no real reason to do so. If their excessive worrying continues over a period of more than six months, then it is officially diagnosed as GAD. GAD is not simply worrying about temporary situations or events caused by challenging circumstances. Symptoms can include:

- Restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating
Feeling on edge
- Headaches
- Feeling a lump in the throat
- Muscle tension resulting in aches and pains
- Fatigue
- Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Irritability
- Nausea

Many people with GAD find that their symptoms first occur in childhood and certain factors, including childhood illness and genetics, may increase the likelihood of developing it.

Research on GAD, however, is ongoing as its causes are complex and not yet fully understood. People often try to alleviate the symptoms of GAD by using drugs or alcohol but these, in fact, make things worse.

Throughout this book you will find tried and tested techniques for overcoming GAD, including a section on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT which has been found to be one of the most effective treatments for the condition.

Anxiety Is Normal

It is important to remember that a certain amount of anxiety is normal and even beneficial.

If our ancestors hadn't felt anxious on coming face to face with a sabre toothed tiger they might have ended up as a tasty snack. Instead, they paid attention to the anxiety signals sent by the ancient fight or flight response and either killed it or ran away.

In our modern world, anxiety still keeps us safe. If feeling anxious about walking up a dark alley alone late at night means that you take a longer but better lit route then this is simply good sense and means you are less likely to be robbed or attacked.

Similarly, if you feel nervous while standing at the edge of a tall cliff or building, it makes it more likely that you will take a step back and less likely therefore that you will fall off, meaning that this, too, is a healthy anxiety.

Our ancient fight or flight response is part of this healthy anxiety. It is a physical response that helps us avoid potentially harmful or dangerous situations. Acting as a safety mechanism for our bodies, it

allows us to respond quickly in an emergency as our bodies release a chemical called adrenalin that triggers lots of physical changes:

- Breathing faster to increase oxygen intake
- Trembling or shaking
- Sweating to cool the body down
- Faster heart rate to increase blood flow to the muscles
- More tension in muscles for a quick response
- Less saliva, causing a dry mouth
- Mind focusing on the source of the threat

Most of these changes will make us better at either fighting or running away – hence ‘fight or flight.’ For instance, increased blood flow to the muscles makes us both stronger and faster while more tension in those muscles prepares us to react quickly to danger.

This survival mechanism has evolved over millions of years to protect us from danger and can still be very useful to us today. It enables us to act fast to jump out of the way of a moving vehicle or to run after a child who is running straight towards some deep water.

Modern life, however, is rarely that dangerous on a physical level. If your partner criticizes you or you have to give a presentation at work, running away or fighting might not be a helpful or appropriate response!

Many situations that make us feel anxious today do not, in fact, require a physical response. Instead, we need to think about practical solutions and this is where the fight or flight response can be a hindrance rather than a help.

When a practical response is really what is called for, the physical and chemical changes that build up in the body as a result of the fight or flight response have nowhere to go. As they are not used up by either running away or fighting, they hang around in the body, potentially causing both physical and emotional harm.

It may help to remember that, although this unused physical activity can be distressing, it is, like anxiety itself, entirely normal. What is more important is to understand how, as well as affecting us physically, anxiety alters the way we think about things. For more about that, read on.

When Anxiety Leads To Panic Attacks

When left unchecked or untreated, anxiety can lead to full-blown panic attacks. If you follow the steps outlined in this book, you stand a very good chance of overcoming your anxiety before it gets to this stage.

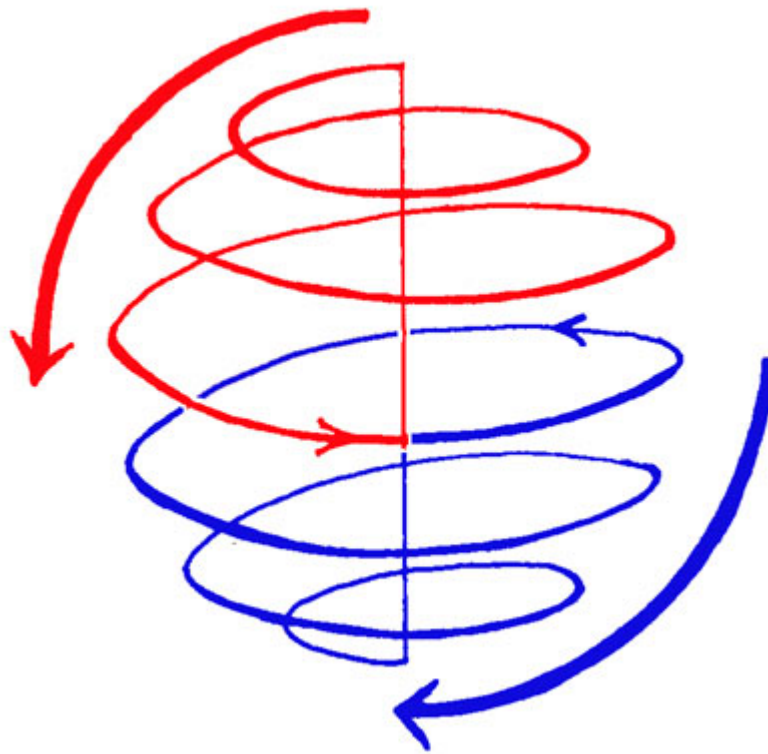
For those who already suffer from panic attacks, working through the Anxiety Away exercises and techniques will help tackle the root cause of those attacks before you get caught up in what we call the spiral of anxiety and panic. This will mean that you suffer far fewer panic attacks until, eventually, you will be able to eliminate them entirely.

Before you learn those techniques and exercises, it is good to understand how the panic spiral begins and leads to a panic attack. The panic spiral is similar to the vicious circle of anxiety which you can read about later on in this book. It is a self-perpetuating series of thoughts, feelings and actions which, once set in motion, only serve to feed themselves and therefore get worse and worse.

The Panic Spiral

PHYSICAL Symptoms

Heart rate increases
Breathing rate increases
Perspiration
Muscle
tension
Discomfort
Dizziness &
nausea
Panic &
severe
anxiety



MENTAL (Thoughts)
Here's trouble
I'll never manage
I'll probably make a fool of myself
I know I can't cope
I feel terrible
I feel faint
I've got to get out of here

Anxiety Away!

Unlike the vicious circle of anxiety, the panic spiral leads to one point: a full-blown panic attack with all its distressing symptoms. Some people find these symptoms so frightening that they confuse them with the symptoms of a heart attack. Here is how to tell the difference:

Symptom	Heart Attack	Panic Attack
Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May or may not be present• If present, the pain is a crushing feeling• It is usually located in the central chest and may extend to the left arm, neck and back• Pain is not made worse by breathing or by pressing on the chest• Pain is usually persistent and lasts longer than 5-10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain is usually described as 'sharp'• Pain tends to be localised over the heart• Pain is made worse by breathing in and out and pressing on the center of the chest• Pain usually disappears within about 5-10 mins
Tingling	Tingling, if present, is usually in the left arm	Tingling, if present, is usually all over the body
Vomiting	Common	You may feel sick but vomiting is less common
Breathing	A heart attack does not cause you to breathe too quickly or too deeply (hyperventilation) whereas panic does. With a heart attack you may feel a little short of breath.	Breathing too quickly or too deeply is an extremely common panic response, and precedes most panic attacks.

Panic Attack First Aid

If you suffer a panic attack, the following techniques will help you manage the symptoms and calm yourself in the short term. In the long term, you need to practice the techniques described later on in this book in order to manage and/or eliminate your panic attacks permanently.

The first thing to do is stop your mind fuelling your panic attack with anxious thoughts. To do this, try these methods:

- Stop focusing on your body. Find a method of distraction such as counting objects in the room or try and picture a pleasant scene in you mind (such as a vacation where you felt completely relaxed.)
- Say to yourself: “I’m having a panic attack. I feel awful but nothing bad can happen. I know what to do. I can control this. It will pass.”

Next, deal with your actions:

- The most important thing you can do when in a panic is face it and stay centered. You may feel an overwhelming urge to run away, but avoidance keeps the panic cycle going. If you can stay

where you are then you can prove that nothing bad will happen if you do.

Lastly, try this emergency Calming Technique:

1. Sit on a comfortable chair
2. Take a breath in for 4 seconds (through nose if possible)
3. Hold that breath for 2 seconds
4. Release the breath, taking 6 seconds (use mouth if possible)

For more breathing techniques, consult the section on Controlled Breathing.

Anxiety Affects Our Thoughts

When you are in real danger it is clearly a good idea to focus on the source of the threat, i.e. that vehicle hurtling towards you at breakneck speed. This 'mind focusing on the source of the threat,' is, as you will remember, a part of the fight or flight response.

Some people, however, react in this way to situations which are not at all threatening or dangerous or they may over-estimate the true level of danger. Their bodies therefore go into fight or flight and their levels of anxiety rocket even when, in fact, the situation is relatively safe.

The problem with all of this is that we really can think too much, especially when suffering from an anxiety disorder. Studies have shown that anxious people are less able to block out distractions which only leads to yet more destructive thinking.

Mindfulness training, which includes disciplines such as meditation and stress-reduction exercises, can be enormously beneficial when dealing with anxious thoughts. You will find a number of these exercises, including meditation tips and techniques, further on in this book.

The trouble with the mental fight or flight response is that it can lead to a vicious cycle of self-perpetuating fear. Due to the anxiety that they are already experiencing, sufferers are constantly on the alert for potential dangers. Naturally, as they are on the look out for them they tend to find them and so that vicious mental cycle is set up.

Such folk tend to worry that things will go wrong even when there is absolutely no reason to believe that this might happen. They might, for example, worry that their alarm clock won't go off in the morning and they will oversleep even though this has never happened before.

Or they could imagine that a family member on a long car journey might crash and die even though that person has a clean driving record and travels long distances regularly. This kind of baseless worrying almost always leads to feelings of anxiety.

Some people feel that this worrying is interfering with their daily lives. They worry all the time and feel that this worrying is out of control. Unsurprisingly, all this worry leads to increased feelings of anxiety although it is important to note that worry and anxiety, while similar, are not exactly the same.

Worry tends to be confined to the mind while anxiety produces that range of physical symptoms we talked about earlier. If you are

experiencing any of those along with worry then you are more likely to be suffering from anxiety.

Of course, excessive worrying can lead to anxiety although it is often the other way round – anxiety leading to excessive worrying. People suffering from anxiety tend to worry about every possible scenario.

They might imagine, for example, that just because their partner is 10 minutes late coming home then he or she has been caught up in a horrific accident. Or they might start to think that what is no more than an ordinary cough is really the first symptom of a life-threatening disease.

It is the extremity of the worrying and its excessive nature that can have such a detrimental impact on our lives. People suffering from anxiety tend to believe that not only will things go horribly wrong but that they will be unable to cope with the situation when it does.

The trick is to break the circular link between worrying and anxiety. This might sound difficult but you can learn to change the way you think and to see things in a way which will make you feel far less anxious.

The Anxiety-Worry Circle

In general, anxiety is considered to encompass all the symptoms already mentioned – thoughts, physical changes, emotions and behaviour. Worry, on the other hand, is considered to be the ‘thinking’ part of anxiety.

You may already have noticed that, when you are anxious, you think in a very different way from when you are relaxed. Things that might not normally worry you can build to enormous proportions and you could find yourself thinking that everything is about to go wrong and that you won’t be able to cope.

Worry tends to make us think in extreme ways. When we worry we believe that:

- Things are going to go wrong
- And when they do, they will go **horribly** wrong!
- Not only that, but when things go horribly wrong, they won’t be able to cope.

The unfortunate thing about this way of thinking is that it only makes anxiety even worse. When people worry in this way they find themselves caught in that vicious circle. The more they worry, the more anxious they feel. The more anxious they feel, the more they worry.



Worst of all, some people actually end up worrying about worrying. These people tend to believe that worrying is deeply negative. They may worry that their worrying is out of control, thinking, for example, that:

- They can't stop worrying
- Their thoughts are going to take over and control them

- Worrying is harmful
- They will go crazy with all this worrying
- If they keep worrying, they will have a breakdown
- If they keep worrying, they will have a heart attack

If you experience such thoughts or are afraid that your worrying is out of control then you are almost inevitably going to worry even more, thereby trapping yourself within that vicious circle. The thing to remember is that, like most worries, these thoughts are exaggerated and not based upon reality.

In further chapters, you will learn how to challenge and ultimately control such unhelpful ways of thinking but for now you may like to look at the following questions and tick or circle the responses that are appropriate to you.

Anxiety-Worry Circle Questions

Tick or circle the appropriate response for you:

Emotional Questions:

- Do I often feel anxious or nervous?
- Do I often feel that I cannot cope?
- Do I often feel that my worries are out of control?
- Do I often feel that I may go crazy with my worries?
- Do I often feel that my worries are taking over my life?

Physical Questions

- Do I experience some or all of these symptoms:
 - Racing heart
 - Shortness of breath
 - Dizziness or light-headedness
 - Churning or tight stomach
 - Trembling/shaking
 - Dry mouth

Mental Questions

- Is worrying a problem for me?
- Do my worries only lead to more worry and anxiety?
- Do I worry about everything and anything?
- Do I think that it is not normal to worry?

Behavioral Questions

- Do I avoid doing particular things or putting myself in particular situations because they make me feel anxious?
- If I start to feel anxious in a particular situation, do I try to escape from it as fast as possible?
- Do I avoid doing things alone because I feel more comfortable when somebody else is with me?
- Do I use certain behaviors to diminish or to disguise my anxiety?

The more questions you tick or circle, the more likely it is that you are caught in a cycle of anxiety and worry. It can help to take a look and decide if you are suffering more from behavioral, emotional, mental or physical symptoms before you move on to the next section.

Many people find that they suffer more in one area than another although others find that they exhibit symptoms in all four. Whichever it is for you, simply note the area(s) you need to work on and, above all, don't worry about it!

This book is designed to deal with those symptoms so that you tackle the thoughts and behaviors that perpetuate that vicious worry/anxiety circle and break it once and for all.

Breaking The Circle

In this section, you will learn how to deal with the parts of the vicious circle of anxiety that affect you so that you can eliminate their impact upon you and therefore break the chain reaction that they set up.

The exercises and techniques within this section are easy, effective and often make a dramatic difference to your symptoms within a short period of time.

Dealing With The Physical Symptoms

At this point, it is a good idea to turn back to that list of physical symptoms at the beginning of this book and tick or circle all those that apply to you. This will provide you with a ready reference list as you work through this section.

The first thing we are going to tackle together are those major physical symptoms such as over-breathing and muscle tension. By doing so, we will be able to reduce or even completely eliminate many of the other anxiety symptoms you experience.

Anxiety Away!

Make sure that you have enough time to complete the exercises undisturbed and without causing any additional stress or anxiety to yourself. Always read through the suggested exercise at least once before you begin and approach it in an open, positive frame of mind.

Keep the focus firmly on yourself and on your ultimate goal: to lead an anxiety free life. Remember that you, just like everyone else, deserve to experience the peace and sense of inner confidence and calm that comes when you overcome this crippling disorder.

Controlled Breathing

Many of us over-breathe without realizing that we are doing it, especially when anxious. Often it is only when we start to feel dizzy or faint or our hands and feet start to tingle that we notice that something is wrong.

These symptoms of over-breathing are due to the lack of oxygen we are taking in as we fail to fill up our lungs enough. The weird thing about over-breathing is that you can feel that you are not getting enough air even when you are gulping lungfuls of it.

If you try to breathe more when over-breathing it will actually make you feel worse although this is not dangerous to your health. The traditional remedy of breathing into a paper bag can certainly help but you may find that the following controlled breathing exercise produces better results.

Before you do the exercise, you may like to check that you are actually over-breathing although it is beneficial whether you are or not. To do so, take the Over-breathing Test:

Over- breathing Test

Read through the following symptoms of over-breathing and tick all that apply:

You breathe more than 10-12 breaths a minute at rest Yes No Unsure

Your chest sometimes feels over-expanded or tight Yes No Unsure

You or others have noticed that you sigh or yawn quite a bit Yes No Unsure

You often gasp or take deep breaths,
particularly in situations that make you anxious Yes No Unsure

If you ticked one or more of these, then it is likely that you over-breathe.

Controlled Breathing Exercise

Do this exercise either lying down or sitting in a comfortable chair. Once you are practised and confident with it, you can also take a few moments out of your day to try this sitting at your desk or even standing.

- 1.** Put one hand on your chest and one on your stomach.
- 2.** Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, letting your chest and stomach swell out with the breath.

Look down at your hands and check that the hand on your stomach is moving. If so, this is good as it means that you are filling up your entire lungs and not just breathing shallowly into the top of them.

The ideal is to see both your hands gently moving as you breathe. If they are not, try pushing out your stomach very slightly as you breathe in. This will encourage you to breathe from the top of your lungs all the way to the bottom.

- 3.** As you breathe in keep it slow, gentle and quiet, aiming to inhale to a steady count of three or four. No-one else should be able to hear you breathe. If you can hear yourself, you are over-breathing.
- 4.** Once you have breathed in, hold that breath for a slow count of three or four. Then breathe out again, just as slowly and quietly as you breathed in, again to a slow count of three or four.
- 5.** After you have exhaled all the air, pause for a moment. Don't race to take in your next breath but do it only when you feel ready.

- 6.** Repeat, trying to get a rhythm going. Keep counting slowly and keep the breathing slow, deep and silent. Do this for at least 5-10 long, slow breaths and then relax and ease out your shoulders, head and neck.

Considered Breathing

As well as performing controlled breathing exercises, it helps to consider activities before you do them and think about how they may affect your breathing.

- When we do some activities we hold our breath. This can make us feel more breathless. Try to breathe through certain movements. e.g. when standing from sitting, breathe in before you move and out as you stand. You are then ready for the next breath.
- When walking or climbing stairs it can help to use a version of the controlled breathing exercise. Breathe in and out on each step or use a pattern that suits you. Slow down a little and you will achieve more.
- Gentle exercise promotes well being and also increases your capacity to breathe more easily and freely.

- **Certain positions help you breath more easily, such as propping yourself against pillows so you are raised when sleeping. Your doctor can advise you as to what is appropriate for you but always be mindful of any physical problems that may preclude such a sleeping position.**

Relaxation

Muscle tension is another physical symptom that, if relieved, can greatly lower your overall feelings of anxiety. The following exercises are designed to relax all the major muscle groups.

Again, read them through a couple of times first before attempting them and make sure you have set aside enough time and space for yourself to reap the benefits.

Try to do these at least twice a day at first, perhaps the simple relaxation exercise when you have less time although ideally you should allow 30 minutes for each session. It probably won't take that long but giving yourself that time means that you won't feel rushed or panicked into finishing the exercises.

Simple Relaxation Exercise

- 1.** Pull your shoulders down towards your feet using your shoulder blades and making your neck feel longer
- 2.** Create space between your arms and body by sliding your elbows away from your sides

- 3.** Keeping arms relaxed and wrists supported, separate your fingers and thumb and stretch them out, arching then flexing them slowly and deliberately
- 4.** Let your thighs and knees relax and roll outwards, wiggling your hips to release any tension
- 5.** Stretch your toes away from your body and relax your ankles, performing slow circles with them to ease out any tension
- 6.** Press your back into the chair and your head into the pillow or back of the chair, allowing it to take the weight and to cradle you
- 7.** Breathe in and out slowly and rhythmically
- 8.** Relax your jaw and feel it become heavier. Let your teeth separate and your tongue fall to the bottom of your mouth
- 9.** Close your eyes and relax your forehead, imagining the palm of your hand gently stroking your brow. Pause there for a few moments then slowly open your eyes and come back to the present, taking as much time as you need.

Progressed Relaxation

- 1.** Take off your shoes, loosen your clothing and lie comfortably on your back on the floor, bed or couch somewhere you will remain undisturbed. Arms should be down by your sides and legs stretched out. Shut your eyes.
- 2.** Begin to breathe deeply and slowly, allowing yourself to let go with every breath. If any thoughts pop into your head, simply let them drift past.
- 3.** Shift your focus to your feet. Tense them up as tight as you can and then relax them. Allow them to flop and feel heavy. Now move on up your legs, doing the same with your calves and then your knees and thighs.
- 4.** Move your focus up to your pelvic region, keeping your breathing deep and even. Enjoy that feeling of tensing and then relaxing. Really let those muscles flop and sink into the floor.
- 5.** When you get to your chest, breathe into it, inhaling deeply as you tense up and exhaling as you let go. Open up your ribs and relax before moving on to your shoulder region.

- 6.** Once your shoulders are nice and relaxed, consciously allow your head and neck to loll heavy. Now scrunch up your face tight, really squeezing those features. Feel your scalp tighten and tingle. Then let everything go.

- 7.** Relax, sink and drift off as you let the floor, bed or couch cradle you. Keep your breathing slow and even but don't worry too much about it. Keep letting those thoughts come and go and simply sink more and more so that you feel safe, relaxed and supported by the surface beneath you.

- 8.** Slowly open your eyes and wriggle your limbs and torso. Gently come up to sitting and then standing, allowing yourself all the time you need.

After both exercises: Take a few big breaths, swing your arms – whatever it takes to celebrate that feeling of deep relaxation and openness. Carry that feeling around with you for the rest of the day/evening and enjoy.

Exercise

Starting or keeping to a suitable exercise routine will help deal with many of the physical symptoms of anxiety such as over-breathing and muscle tension while also improving your mood and therefore relieving the mental symptoms as well.

Whether you choose to practice a martial art such as Tai Chi or Qi Gong, both excellent for combating anxiety, or instead prefer jogging or the gym, the trick is to work within your personal limits and to listen to your body.

Pushing yourself too hard will only stress you even more and will counteract many of the benefits of exercise. Remember that you only need around 30 minutes of effective exercise at least three times a week to experience increased fitness and decreased levels of stress and anxiety.

The direct anxiety-relieving benefits of exercise are that it is:

Mood boosting – Regular exercise increases self-confidence and improves sleep, which is often disrupted by stress or anxiety.

Endorphin producing – Physical activity boosts production of the brain's feel-good neurotransmitters which are known as endorphins.

Calming - As a meditation in motion, the focus on a single activity takes you away from everyday stresses and cares. While shedding tension and engaging in the task at hand, you also experience the increased energy and optimism that comes with physical activity.

Dealing With The Mental Symptoms

As you now know, the mental symptoms of anxiety, which include worrying and anticipating the worst, also feed that vicious, self-perpetuating circle.

In this section we will look at ways to deal with those mental symptoms although you will notice that some of the methods or techniques discussed deal with physical and sometimes emotional symptoms as well. This is because, as I said earlier, dealing with one will often impact beneficially on another.

Work Out What Makes You Anxious

The primary thing you need to do when dealing with the mental symptoms of anxiety is to work out which thoughts are making you anxious. Once you have done this, you can replace those thoughts with ones that are more productive and which enhance rather than destroy your health.

It can, however, be hard to identify the thoughts that are making you anxious as you may have become so used to worrying that it has become second nature. This leads to worrying thoughts automatically

popping up in your mind without you even being aware of them at times.

What you need to do is observe and pay attention to whatever is going through your mind whenever you start to feel anxious. Once you have identified these thoughts, write them down in a notebook. By keeping a record of these thoughts, you can start to manage them.

To do this effectively, follow this plan:

- 1.** Write down what you were doing when you started to feel anxious.
- 2.** Ask yourself what you were thinking about when you started to feel anxious and, if there was an image, describe it.
- 3.** Now write down how those thoughts made you feel, e.g. panic-stricken, nervous or scared.

If you like, you can set out a table like the one below and simply fill it in when the need arises. To help you do this, I have included a blank example that you can fill in immediately.

Anxiety Away!

Situation	My Thoughts	How This Made Me Feel
Friend does not spend much time talking to me at a party	Why does she not want to spend time with me? Does she not like me anymore? What have I said or done?	Upset, anxious, paranoid
Giving wedding speech	I can't do this. No-one will laugh. I will let down the bride and groom.	Panic-stricken, guilty, anxious

Situation	My Thoughts	How This Made Me Feel

Challenging Anxious Thoughts

Now that you know which thoughts make you anxious, you need to prove to yourself that this is a negative way of behaving and that there are better, healthier alternatives.

If you take an objective look at those anxiety-provoking thoughts, you will soon realize that they are almost always based upon guesswork and exaggeration. Thinking about a situation in a realistic, more balanced way will help to break the vicious circle of anxiety.

To develop a more confident, less anxious way of thinking it is helpful to practice thought challenging. This extremely effective technique becomes easier and more powerful the more you practice it.

First, you need to ask yourself the following five questions:

- Are there any good reasons to be so worried?
- Are there any good reasons not to be so worried?
- Is there another way I could look at this?
- What is the worst that could happen?

- What can I do about it?

Now let's look more closely at each of those questions in turn.

Are there any good reasons to be so worried?

When answering this question, ask yourself:

- What are the facts of this situation?
- Do those facts support my thoughts or contradict them?
- Would someone else think that my thoughts were based on facts?

Are there any good reasons not to be so worried?

Now you need to ask yourself if there are any reasons why you should NOT be thinking this way. You may find some clues in your answers to the first question as to why you need not be worried.

Alternatively, you could think of things that have happened before that contradict your current worry or think about times you have worried about something similar and turned out to be wrong.

You can also try asking yourself these questions:

- Am I trying to predict the future here?
- Am I jumping to conclusions?
- Am I overestimating the likelihood of this happening?
- Am I trying to guess what other people think?
- Will this problem matter one week/month/year from now?

Is there another way I could look at this?

Whatever it is that you are worrying about, there is almost always another, more helpful way of looking at the situation. When you are anxious, however, it can be impossible to see the bigger picture. It may help, therefore, to look at this from another person's point of view.

You could ask yourself what a close friend whom you trust would think in your situation. Or you could think about what you might say to a friend in a similar situation. The point here is to try to stand

outside your own thoughts and to see the situation from a more objective angle.

You need to make sure that the alternatives you come up with are realistic and to decide whether these are more helpful than the original thought which was worrying you.

What is the worst that could happen?

Almost everyone who suffers from anxiety thinks about the bad things that could happen in the future. These thoughts only make you more anxious so the natural response is to try to push them out of your mind before really examining them carefully.

The important thing is, however, to confront those thoughts and think them through to their logical conclusion. Ask yourself 'What really is the worst that could happen?' This might show you that:

- Your worst fear is so exaggerated that it is highly unlikely, or even impossible, that it would ever happen.
- Your worst fear may be far less likely to happen than you previously predicted.

- Even if your worst fear does happen, you may be able to cope with it far better than you previously imagined.

Once you have worked out what your worst fear is, ask yourself how likely it is that this would actually happen. That might be all you need to put that fear into perspective.

You can take things a step further and ask yourself how you would cope if this happened. In this case, don't underestimate yourself or your capabilities. As you will see in the final question, you probably have all the skills and experience you need to cope in difficult situations.

What can I do about it?

With this final question, ask yourself:

- What skills do I have that might help me cope with this situation?
 - What past experience do I have that might help me cope with this situation?
 - What advice would I give to a friend in a similar situation?
-

- Who can I ask for help or advice?
- Do I have all the facts I need to deal with this situation? If not, how can I find out what I need to know?

It is important that you ask yourself what you can do in the immediate future to deal with a specific situation and then come up with a plan of action.

To help you do this, you might like to follow the six steps of problem solving set out below:

- 1. Define the problem.** Instead of just going over and over it in your head, try to be specific. Decide exactly what the problem is, breaking it down into smaller problems if necessary.
- 2. Make a list of your resources and possible solutions.**
Have you solved a similar problem in the past?

Do you have any skills, knowledge or personal strengths that will help you solve this problem?

Is there anyone who could help you?

Write down as many solutions as you can think of and don't worry about how unlikely or silly they might seem.

- 3. Choose a solution from your list.** Read through the solutions you have come up with and decide how likely each one is to succeed.

Consider also how much time and effort each would take and whether or not you would need to enlist the help of a friend.

Then pick a solution you are going to put into action. You don't have to choose one that will solve the whole problem – as long as it gets you moving in the right direction, it's a good choice.

- 4. Make a plan.** Break the solution you have chosen down into small, manageable steps. Make each step very clear and specific. Decide which steps you are going to take first and set out your plan in order.
- 5. Do it.** Try out your solution, even if it is only a first step in solving your problem.

6. Review the outcome. If it works, that's great. Congratulate yourself and remember it for next time. If it doesn't work, review what happened – do you need to rework your plan?

Do you need to try again? Remember that even if you haven't initially solved your problem you are at least dealing with it. This in itself will help you towards your successful solution.

Self Massage

Almost all forms of massage are therapeutic when it comes to alleviating anxiety and panic. You may like to treat yourself to a regular massage with a trained therapist but, when time or money is short, self-massage is a good alternative.

This powerful healing tool can really help to reduce feelings of anxiety. Touch is one of our most basic human needs and the self application of it as self-massage has an immediate, positive effect mentally, physically and emotionally.

Practised regularly, self-massage is an invaluable addition to your anxiety management regime. It is simple and, as with all the techniques in this book, gets better and easier the more you practice it. To begin, read through the instructions carefully, make sure you have enough time and space to remain undisturbed and then simply enjoy the experience!

Self-Massage of the Feet

Professional reflexologists, or foot masseurs, understand that each area of the foot relates to a corresponding area of the body. This is why a foot massage can be just as beneficial as a whole body massage.

The toes and ball of the foot relate to the upper part of the body. The central area of the arch relate to the torso. The heel is related to the parts of the body below the waist.

Don't worry too much, however, about which area relates to what. It is important that you simply find any sore areas in your feet and work on them a little longer than the rest. Above all, keep it simple. This is about pleasure and healing so don't worry too much about the specifics.

First do pressure massage over the entire foot. Usually the bottom of the foot is the primary focus, however, the top of the foot and the ankle area are good to target as well. As you are massaging the whole foot note areas of particular tenderness. Come back and work specifically on the tender areas. These are the areas that need it the most.

Generally the pressure is applied by the thumbs. It will take a while to build up your thumbs. Alternate the techniques for pressure application by using bunched, extended fingers, the knuckles, the heel of the hand or a gripping motion where the whole hand provides the force for pressing inward with the four fingers.

Start with light pressure and work up to substantial pressure. Imagine the pressure necessary to impress a new tennis ball or the force

necessary to pick up a brick between your thumb and index finger. These are images to give you guidance on the amount of pressure necessary. If it hurts, stop and try again another day.

Over a few days you will notice any sore areas easing and you will find it quicker and easier to relax and simply enjoy the benefits of the massage. It is best to combine a foot massage with hand and ear massage for optimum results.

Self-Massage of the Hands

The basic technique of self-massage for the hands is the same as for the feet. However, the hands are much easier because they are so easy to reach. Without sitting down or having to remove your shoes you can go right to work. You can do this anywhere at any time.

Begin by massaging your hands all over with firm pressure. Notice areas of tenderness. Return to the tender areas and administer firm pressure for a few minutes. Finish by rubbing your hands together vigorously and then shaking them out at the wrists to relax any residual tension.

Self-Massage of the Ears

When you first begin to work on your ears you will notice that within 4-5 minutes of vigorous massage your ears get hot. This is caused by the increase of blood flow to that area. Traditional Chinese medicine holds that when the blood flow is increased to the ears then your energy (or Qi) is increased as well.

The ears are also full of nerve endings and the combination of the presence of these with effect of the pressure and the heightened circulation stimulates the reflexes of the microsystems of the ear, in turn benefiting the entire body and helping it to relax.

There is also evidence that the stimulation of the ear reflexes works on the brain chemistry, specifically the production of important neurotransmitters. This, in turn, can help alleviate the mental symptoms of panic and anxiety.

To massage the ears effectively, begin by gently making circular rubbing motions, working from the top of the ear to the lobe. Then concentrate on the lobe itself, again working in circular motions, before giving it a few gentle tugs. Finish by cupping your hands over both ears for a few seconds and enjoy the warmth and silence before very slowly taking your hands away.

Whole Body Self-Massage

When you have the appropriate time and space, you can give yourself a whole body self-massage to really relax all those tense muscles and produce a surge of pleasure-giving endorphins. As always, read through the instructions first before beginning and approach the exercise with an open-mind and a positive attitude.

You start this self-massage sequence by sitting on a chair or stool.

- 1.** Stretch your hands in preparation. Lengthen your arm to lock your elbow and gently pull back on each of your fingers, including your thumb.

Then bend each finger, then hand toward the palm. Shake your hands, bend each at the wrist and spread your fingers as wide as possible. Repeat this process.

- 2.** Keep your spine as supported and erect as possible and your feet planted firmly on the floor. Remember to breathe!

Reach across your chest with your right arm, resting your arm on your chest and placing your right hand on your left shoulder. Cradle the right elbow with your left hand for support.

Gently begin kneading the tissues of your left shoulder, as soft or firm as you like. You can make circles with your fingers or knuckles, squeeze with your fingers and thumb, or just use pressure to compress the tissues.

- 3.** Work your way up the back of your neck, using the cradling hand to assist in pushing the right arm up. Grasp the back of the neck gently and squeeze. Hold for ten seconds. Repeat.

On the second squeeze, gently stretch the tissues behind the neck by taking your chin toward your chest. Hold for ten seconds. Repeat this process on the other side.

- 4.** Still sitting, lengthen your spine by gently lifting up from the top of your head. When you do this your chin should drop a little toward your chest.

Gently allow your left ear to drop toward your left shoulder, stretching the tissues of the right side of your neck and shoulder. You can assist this stretch by reaching over the top of your head with your left hand and pulling the head in the same direction.

Hold the stretch to the count of ten. Repeat on the right side.

- 5.** Next, staying tall through your spine, turn your head toward the left as far as it can comfortably go, and assist the stretch by taking your left hand and placing it on the right side of your face, pulling your cheek toward the stretch.

Hold to the count of ten. Repeat on the right side.

- 6.** Now, gently drop your chin to your chest. You can increase this stretch by lifting up the back of your head, lengthening your spine even more.

Relax and gently allow your head to stretch back, supporting your head by placing interlaced hands behind the neck and stretching over your hands, allowing your mouth to open and your jaw to relax.

- 7.** Lifting up tall from the top of your head once again, imagine you have a pencil coming out of the top of your head with the lead pointing toward the ceiling. Begin making small circles with your head, drawing imaginary concentric circles on the ceiling with the pencil.

After you have drawn five circles, reverse the process, drawing large circles to small in the other direction.

- 8.** Now find a comfortable place to lie down on your back.

Rub your hands briskly together and place them over your eyes. Hold your hands over your eyes to a count of ten. Take a couple of breaths.

- 9.** Gently move your hands toward your temples and rub in circles, first in one direction, then the other, moving out toward your hairline.

Rub your forehead and your scalp, softly or vigorously, whichever feels best to you.

Give your ears a gentle tug down, and squeeze the perimeters of your ears. Stick your tongue out and make a funny face.

Rub your cheeks and jaw, under your jaw, and gently rub your throat. Let everything flop and sink heavily into the floor. Take as long as you need before slowly coming to sitting and then standing, yawning and stretching where necessary.

Now take those good feelings with you as you get on with your day!

Yoga

Practising yoga is another popular way of combating the physical and mental symptoms of anxiety and its combination of physical and mental discipline really does help calm body and mind.

Yoga has many styles and forms – some more intense than others. Hatha yoga, one of the most commonly available forms, is also one of the best for anxiety management.

It is particularly popular with beginners because of its slower, easier movements and it is precisely these attributes that make it so suitable for anxiety sufferers.

You can benefit, however, from almost any form of yoga although some dynamic forms, or styles such as Bikram yoga which is practised in a hot environment, might not be as suitable if you suffer from an anxiety disorder.

The most beneficial elements of yoga are the controlled breathing and the focus away from everyday concerns as your body is taken through poses that require calm concentration.

The increased fitness and resultant decrease in heart rate and blood pressure will also prove beneficial when managing anxiety. Classes

Anxiety Away!

are widely available and it is a good idea to at least start learning with an instructor rather than from a book or DVD. You should, of course, consult your health care practitioner before starting classes if you have any major health concerns.

Taking a few moments away from a busy day to practice yoga is an excellent way to give mind and body a mini vacation from all that stress.

The combination of deep breathing and increased blood flow thanks to the poses will allow you to return to your routine refreshed and relaxed, allowing you to cope better with everyday concerns.

Gazing At Nothing

Another excellent mental relaxation technique is one I call Gazing At Nothing. This can easily be performed anywhere and works particularly well in combating the mental symptoms of anxiety.

This is especially useful if you only have a short time for relaxation or if you want to take a few moments out of a busy day and have nowhere to lie or sit as in the progressive muscle relaxation.

- 1.** Start by closing your eyes and taking slow, deep breaths as in the exercise above.
- 2.** With your eyes still gently closed, look straight ahead and stare into space as if you are looking at a distant black spot.
- 3.** Keep staring at this spot and allow your thoughts to float away from you. If they keep racing or you find you can't control them, concentrate on slowing your breathing even further as you focus on that spot.
- 4.** If you like, you can place your thoughts in front of you where the spot is located, enlarging it so it seems as if your thoughts

are on a black screen. Then imagine taking an eraser and simply rubbing them out.

- 5.** Always, however, return to that simple black spot and the feeling of staring into nothing. When you achieve that pleasant sensation of total peace, enjoy it and float with it.

- 6.** Slowly bring your focus back in on yourself when you are ready. Open your eyes and blink a few times. Perform a few shoulder rolls or gentle neck bends if necessary. Keep that pleasant, calm sensation with you as you get on with your day.

Meditation

Meditation is an excellent way to take time out and give yourself the space you need to retain your equilibrium and therefore combat anxiety. There is no big mystery to meditation and no need to over-complicate it. Put simply, it is deep relaxation for both mind and body.

Just a few moments a day will produce a real sense of calm and tranquility. It is especially useful during busy, stressful periods because it allows you to untangle and eliminate all those jumbled thoughts that are crowding your mind.

Anyone can practise meditation anywhere: while waiting in line, at work, at home or while simply out for a walk. If you are in a more controlled environment, say at home, you could choose to follow a guided meditation from a book, DVD or CD. Or you could try one of the methods outlined below:

Mantra Meditation

With this form of meditation you choose a calming word, thought or phrase and silently repeat it over and over. This helps push away other, more distracting thoughts and produces a profound sense of

calm. Transcendental Meditation is a form of Mantra Meditation and is highly recommended for those who suffer from anxiety.

Mindful Meditation

This form of meditation may seem unusual in that, instead of closing your eyes and drifting away from your environment, you choose to become more aware of it and therefore more accepting.

This works by allowing you to accept thoughts or distractions and simply let them flow over you. Focusing on your breath and observing its flow helps you to achieve this state of relaxed mindfulness.

Mindful Meditation is particularly useful during potentially stressful occasions such as a party. You can do this without anyone even noticing, simply observing, accepting and letting everything flow over you while keeping your attention on your breathing until you feel calmer and in control.

Walking Meditation

Another method which is well suited to helping combat anxiety as it allows you to withdraw from stress-inducing situations while also giving yourself a real physical and mental treat.

During a walking meditation you adopt the principles of the Mindfulness Meditation in that you notice and appreciate everything around you as you pass by at a steady, even pace, concentrating on the motion of your legs and feet.

You can even combine this with a Mantra Meditation, silently repeating a calming word, thought or phrase in your head as you breathe deeply and regularly.

The benefit of this kind of meditation is that you reap the rewards of both physical exercise and mental calming while giving yourself a proper psychological boost.

This sort of 'me time' is vital if you suffer from anxiety. Again, it need only be a few minutes, although 30 is optimum. Take a walking meditation a few times a week and you will quickly start to see and feel the benefits.

Dealing With The Emotional Symptoms

As you now know, the emotional symptoms of anxiety are inextricably interlinked with the mental, physical and behavioral symptoms.

Often we think it is the way we feel that is triggering all the other reactions but, as you have seen in the vicious circle of anxiety, they all impact upon one another in a self-perpetuating, unhealthy cycle.

Talk It Through

An excellent way to cope with the emotional symptoms of anxiety is to talk through your concerns with close family, friends or a therapist. If those close to you know about your concerns, they are far more likely to be understanding of your choices. Similarly, they can then help you through situations they know might make you feel anxious.

Often it is more helpful to talk through your feelings with someone entirely objective such as a trained therapist. They can help lead you through exercises similar to those in this program and to understand how the way you are feeling is not necessarily realistic.

If you do seek the help of a therapist, take your time to choose one you feel comfortable with and do not be afraid to explore other

options if, after a number of sessions, you do not find yourself making adequate progress.

Bear in mind, however, that anxiety disorders can take some time to eliminate, depending upon the patient. Many anxiety sufferers also have to deal with other conditions such as depression or alcohol dependency before they can truly deal with and eradicate anxiety from their lives.

Dealing With The Behavioral Symptoms

If you are feeling anxious, it stands to reason that you will want to get away from a stressful situation as quickly as possible or you may try to make the situation safer. In a truly life-threatening situation, this would be a sensible response that ultimately protects you from harm.

The problem is that, nowadays, very few situations are truly that dangerous and it is when we start trying to escape or avoid such situations that we need to change our behaviour. If we don't, we set up yet another vicious cycle in which the more we avoid something, the more we reinforce the idea that there really is something to fear.

Over time, this leads to us becoming more and more scared of things. Worse, we rarely stop to find out that the initial situation was never that bad in the first place. This avoidance is just one of what we call 'safety behaviors' and these are often used in social situations such as parties.

Here, classically, anxiety sufferers might avoid talking or stick close to friends or a partner. They might also drink too much or busy themselves taking coats or handing round food rather than mixing with other partygoers.

Avoiding anxiety-provoking situations in this way, or using safety behaviors to control anxiety, might seem to solve the problem in the short term. In the long term, however, the more you use these strategies, the more your fear grows. Each time you avoid a situation or use a safety behavior, you send a negative message to yourself.

To eliminate anxiety behaviors in the long term, therefore, it is important to break this negative pattern as soon as possible. The first step towards this is to work out what situations you are avoiding and whether you are using safety behaviors.

To do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- Which situations do I avoid because they make me anxious?
- Do I ever escape from a situation or activity because I feel anxious? If so, what kinds of situations are these?
- Do I have behavioral tricks I use to make me feel more comfortable in situations that make me anxious? If so, what behavioral tricks do I use?

Read through your answers and now make two lists:

1. Things you have been avoiding that you would like to start doing.

- 2. Safety behaviors you have been using that you would like to eliminate from your life.**

Now extend your thinking by asking yourself ‘why?’

Very often people avoid or escape situations because they think something will go wrong. They might imagine that they will embarrass themselves at a party or that they will say something stupid and everyone will laugh.

We tend to use safety behaviors because we think we will be able to prevent something like this happening. The person who imagines they will say something stupid will simply not talk while the person who believes they will embarrass themselves at a party might simply not go or may stay close to a friend or partner all evening.

By questioning why you have these beliefs and writing down your answers you can begin to spot your own safety behaviors. You can then in turn start to examine whether these are justified. Using safety behaviors means that you never give yourself the chance to find out if these are based on the truth or not.

If, however, you challenge yourself to face a situation and get rid of those safety behaviors, you can find out the truth – which, more often than not, is far better than you expected. This process can help you to

think about things in amore realistic, balanced way and to reduce your overall anxiety in the long term.

All you need do is use the same thought-challenging strategy you learned earlier in this book. Write down one of your anxious thoughts that relate to your safety behaviors and examine the evidence for and against. Repeat this process for each of your anxious thoughts.

Eliminating Safety Behaviors

Now that you have adopted more realistic thoughts about your anxieties by carrying out the thought-challenging process, you need to test those thoughts by doing the things you have been avoiding and gradually reducing and eventually eliminating your safety behaviors.

You can do this with the help of the following tips:

- Don't worry if you feel anxious when you first face a difficult situation – this is entirely normal and to be expected.
- Take your time and work at your own pace. Start with baby steps and work up to the really scary situations that you have been purposefully avoiding.
- Drop your safety behaviors one at a time rather than trying to get rid of them all at once. This may take longer but will be easier for you to work through.
- Don't expect your anxiety to disappear immediately – it will take time for you to adjust your behaviors and to absorb this adjustment. The longer you manage to stay in a previously anxiety-provoking situation, the likelier it is that your anxiety will be reduced.
- Don't expect all your anxiety to disappear the moment you have experienced a previously difficult situation or dropped a safety behaviour. The longer you have been avoiding that situation or

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using that behaviour, the longer it will take for you to get rid of your anxiety completely. Repetition is important here – the more you practice, the less anxious you will feel.

Visualization

Visualizing ourselves in positive ways and situations is a technique which has grown in popularity and which yields impressive results. Put simply, all you have to do is clearly imagine yourself acting or being in a way which is life-enhancing for it to have a powerful effect on your brain and belief system, raising confidence and reducing anxiety.

Try the simple visualization below, either by reading through it and then re-imagining it or by recording your voice reading it so that you can then close your eyes and listen to it. This visualization is designed to help you picture your special place, a sanctuary where you can always return in your imagination if you are feeling anxious or stressed.

Special Place Visualization

Imagine you are walking up a hill. See the trees around you. Feel the light breeze, the sun creating patterns through the leaves. As you walk up the path be conscious you are leaving the everyday world behind you. You are breathing fresh air. Now and then you see a view far below through the trees. You are getting higher and higher.

You now come upon a light filled clearing. You notice a stream with water falling over a rock shelf into a pool large enough to swim in. The stream and the pool are surrounded by rocks, ferns and moss. It is inviting. Watch the sun glittering off the water. Watch the water spray.

It is warm so you stand underneath the falling water. The sun fills each droplet with light and you feel as though you are taking a light shower. You feel light entering your head and flowing inside your body. You see light cascading around your body.

You dive into the pool, feeling the water cleansing your body. You get out and find a warm rock in the sun and lie back or sit comfortably. You become aware of all the sensations of your body. The sun on your face, the light breeze. You begin to hear the sounds of the forest. You look at the different colours, shapes textures.

You are feeling safe, warm and relaxed. This is your special place. A place where you can come to and be yourself. At this stage you might like to invite someone into your place. Perhaps a wise old person, a mother or father figure, or a child.

Each of these represents a part of you. Watch what they do... perhaps they have something for you – a gift or a message. Become aware of

this. What are they trying to tell you? Give them a hug and watch them go.

Now you may have a question or a problem facing you. Just bring it to you mind and let it go. Become aware of any feelings, imagery or thoughts you have.

Before you leave your special place, you may wish to state an affirmation... say it in positive language using the present tense... “I am” Feel it as part of you. See it happening.

Now when you are ready, leave your special place and come back to the room.... to your body. Wiggle your toes and fingers. Gently stretch and come to a sitting position. Slowly stand up and enjoy that sense of peace and wellbeing. Keep those feelings with you as you get on with your day and know that you can return to your special place any time you feel anxious or stressed.

Mind Movies

Some people prefer not to visualize for themselves but to gaze at restful scenes such as a beautiful sunset or a glorious stretch of nature in order to relax and feel less anxious.

Mind Movies are a way of bringing those stress-reducing scenes to you without you needing to go anywhere. You can play them whenever you need to on your computer and a Mind Movie especially designed to combat anxiety comes with the Anxiety Away program.

To get the most benefit from it, choose a time when you can sit comfortably in front of your computer undisturbed. Then simply double click on the appropriate file and let it play.

As it plays, allow the scenes to drift in front of you much as you have learned to do in the Meditation section of this book. Don't think too much or feel you have to do anything other than to let the beautiful images and healing sounds do their work.

Use the Mind Movie as often as you wish to aid relaxation and to de-stress. It only takes a few minutes but is a powerful antidote to anxiety and a valuable addition to your self-help armory.

Journaling

It can really help to keep a journal of your progress in reducing and eliminating anxiety from your life, writing down each thing you try and reporting the outcome. This can prove to be a tremendous boost to your confidence as you see the evidence of your achievement in tackling situations you previously avoided or found difficult.

Look at the following table for an example of how you could record your progress:

Action taken	What I was worried may happen	What actually happened
I went to a Christmas party	I was worried I would drink too much because I was nervous and that I would then behave badly	I felt nervous but I sipped slowly at just one drink and talked to a number of friends. I actually enjoyed myself more and more as the evening went on.
I gave a presentation at work	I was worried I would flunk the presentation, that everyone would laugh at me and think I wasn't up to the job.	I practised beforehand so that the presentation went smoothly. I took my time and did my research so I could answer questions confidently. The presentation went really well and my boss was impressed.

Seeing things written down like this will help you to think about situations and their outcomes in a more realistic way. Keep in mind that things do not always go the way you would like or have planned but that, just because this happens, it doesn't mean it won't go well another time.

The important thing is to keep trying which, in turn, will build your confidence that you can deal with situations even if they don't go perfectly every time.

Overcoming your avoidance and safety behaviors requires some work on your part and will inevitably make you feel anxious at times. Changing long-standing habits is always a time-consuming process but it is well worth your dedication for the enormous reduction in your anxiety.

Don't become despondent or anxious if you don't see immediate results – it took a long time for your anxiety to build to this level and it is important that you allow yourself the space and time to rid yourself of these behaviors once and for all.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

So what is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (or CBT)?

It is a way of talking about:

- How you think about yourself, the world and other people
- How what you do affects your thoughts and feelings.

CBT can help you to change how you think ("Cognitive") and what you do ("Behavior").

These changes can help you to feel better. Unlike some of the other talking treatments, it focuses on the "here and now" problems and difficulties. Instead of focusing on the causes of your distress or symptoms in the past, it looks for ways to improve your state of mind **now**.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is very useful in treating anxiety disorders. The cognitive part helps people change the thinking patterns that support their fears, and the behavioral part helps people change the way they react to anxiety-provoking situations.

For example, CBT can help people with panic disorder learn that their panic attacks are not really heart attacks and help people with social phobia learn how to overcome the belief that others are always watching and judging them. When people are ready to confront their

fears, they are shown how to use exposure techniques to desensitize themselves to situations that trigger their anxieties.

People with OCD who fear dirt and germs are encouraged to get their hands dirty and wait increasing amounts of time before washing them. The therapist helps the person cope with the anxiety that waiting produces; after the exercise has been repeated a number of times, the anxiety diminishes.

People with social phobia may be encouraged to spend time in feared social situations without giving in to the temptation to flee and to make small social blunders and observe how people respond to them. Since the response is usually far less harsh than the person fears, these anxieties are lessened.

People with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) may be supported through recalling their traumatic event in a safe situation, which helps reduce the fear it produces. CBT therapists also teach deep breathing and other types of exercises to relieve anxiety and encourage relaxation.

Exposure-based behavioral therapy has been used for many years to treat specific phobias. The person gradually encounters the object or situation that is feared, perhaps at first only through pictures or tapes, then later face-to-face. Often the therapist will accompany the person to a feared situation to provide support and guidance.

CBT is undertaken when people decide they are ready for it and with their permission and cooperation. To be effective, the therapy must be directed at the person's specific anxieties and must be tailored to his or her needs. There are no side effects other than the discomfort of temporarily increased anxiety.

CBT or behavioral therapy often lasts about 12 weeks. It may be conducted individually or with a group of people who have similar problems. Group therapy is particularly effective for social phobia. Often "homework" is assigned for participants to complete between sessions.

There is some evidence that the benefits of CBT last longer than those of medication for people with panic disorder, and the same may be true for OCD, PTSD, and social phobia. If a disorder recurs at a later date, the same therapy can be used to treat it successfully a second time.

If you would like to try CBT, ask your doctor for a referral to a suitable therapist. If, after undergoing CBT, you find your symptoms returning then alert your doctor immediately so that you can consider undergoing further treatment.

Looking After Your Health

Another important way to manage the physical, mental and emotional symptoms of anxiety is to ensure that you take good care of your overall health. You need to make sure that you eat healthily and maintain a regular exercise regimen. If you do not exercise regularly then this is a great time to start.

Avoid stimulants, especially caffeine which causes much the same changes in your body as the fight or flight response. Caffeine is in tea (including green and some herbal teas), coffee, cola and some other carbonated drinks as well as in chocolate.

Think about how many of these items you consume on a daily basis – it's probably more than you think so you may want to keep a caffeine diary for a week or so to check how much you are actually ingesting.

The problem is that caffeine is addictive, so that the more you have, the more you crave of it. In addition, your tolerance of it will increase over time so that you will need more and more caffeine to experience the same effects.

As with any addictive substance, you will experience withdrawal symptoms if you don't get it. Some of the more common of these

include headaches, tiredness, shakiness and a strong desire to have a cup of coffee or tea!

Try, therefore, not to go cold turkey but to gradually cut down your caffeine intake until it is minimal. You don't have to cut it from your diet altogether but avoid it in the late afternoons and evening if you are having trouble sleeping. A small amount of caffeine will not have an adverse effect on your health or anxiety levels.

Other things to avoid are excess sugar and alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant that can interfere with your sleep patterns. Remember: moderation in everything. The less you overload your system, the more it will be able to cope.

Think of the old saying – 'a healthy body equals a healthy mind.' This is especially true when it comes to anxiety sufferers. Treat your body with respect and aim to achieve balance between your mental and physical needs.

Keep vitamin and mineral intake at optimum levels by eating as much fruit and vegetables as possible. Ensure that you remain hydrated by drinking at least 8 glasses of water a day and get as much sleep as possible – a minimum of 7 hours per night.

Nutritional Supplements

Combined with a balanced, healthy diet, there are some specific herbs and supplements which can actively help you manage anxiety. These are ideal to take during a period such as the winter holidays, when your body's defences are generally lower and you need to boost yourself for a few weeks or months.

A recent study conducted by Nutrition Journal concluded that, based on the available evidence, "nutritional and herbal supplementation is an effective method for treating anxiety and anxiety-related conditions without the risk of serious side effects."

It went on to state that strong evidence exists for the use of herbal supplements containing extracts of passionflower or kava and combinations of L-lysine or L-arginine in the treatment of anxiety disorders and symptoms.

The report also cited valerian as being effective although the jury is still out on St John's Wort. Magnesium, a mineral often recommended as supplementation for anxiety disorders, was also found to show promise.

A safe and effective option would be to take a good general multivitamin and mineral supplement alongside your normal, healthy

diet. That way you can ensure that your body's nutritional needs are properly met during a time which is often filled with fatty, sugary, unhealthy food that can play havoc with a system already afflicted by anxiety.

Conclusion

The Anxiety Away program is the perfect way to identify, reduce and ultimately eliminate your anxiety symptoms. As with any program, it is important that you don't simply read the book and put it aside but actually use the exercises and techniques you have learned.

It is a good idea to print out a copy and have it close to hand so you can refer to it easily whenever necessary. As with recovery from any chronic condition, beating anxiety takes patience and practice but rest assured that you can and will overcome this debilitating disorder provided you follow the advice in this book.

Should symptoms recur, don't worry about it but simply choose and use one of the techniques given to you in this report. Remember that overcoming anxiety is a daily practice and that you need to remain vigilant in order to safeguard your health and wellbeing.

With the help of Anxiety Away, I know you can do it. You can lead a life free from anxiety and experience the calm confidence that comes with knowing you can handle anything.

Anxiety Away!

Believe that you can cope and you will – you are now equipped with all the tools and techniques you could ever need. The knowledge you have absorbed is inside you, just waiting for you to access it whenever you feel the need.

I wish you all the serenity and peace you deserve. Enjoy your anxiety free future!