



Center for
Personal Wellness
Psychotherapy and Consultation

3 TIPS FOR EASING THE

ANXIOUS MIND

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3 Tips for Easing the Anxious Mind

Are you feeling particularly overwhelmed and stressed these days?

Do you find at times that you have a hard time shutting off your brain and keeping it from constantly racing? Since you decided to pick up this guide, I'm going to guess that the answer is yes! And I'm excited to help!

Stress and anxiety are a part of life. However, you don't need to be enslaved by your anxiety and instead can build new skills and strengthen skills you might already have to help ease your anxious mind. Learning ways to ease your anxious mind can take some practice, but with a set of coping strategies and tips, I assure you it can be done!

So today I want to share with you some of my go to methods for easing our minds, calming ourselves, and getting through challenging bouts of anxiety. So the next time you find yourself becoming consumed with anxiety and feel like your brain just won't shut off, we hope you will turn to this roundup of coping mechanisms.

While the tips I will share are not complicated, making them a habit still takes time. Be patient and remember that every day is a chance to try again. I encourage you to revisit this guide on a regular basis to remind yourself of your goal!

- Laura Roetgerman, Psy.D

Who we are...

The Center for Personal Wellness is a counseling, consultation and coaching boutique style practice located in Minster, Ohio. We strive to provide the highest quality of care and individualized services for each of our clients, no matter the age or issue. At CPW, YOU are the priority!

How to use this guide...

On the following pages you'll find our 3 Tips to help ease your anxious mind. It's important to remember that anxiety is a part of life. Actually, in some ways we need a little bit of anxiety to survive. What we don't want is for you to feel consumed by your anxiety and racing mind. We encourage you to practice these tips on a daily basis.

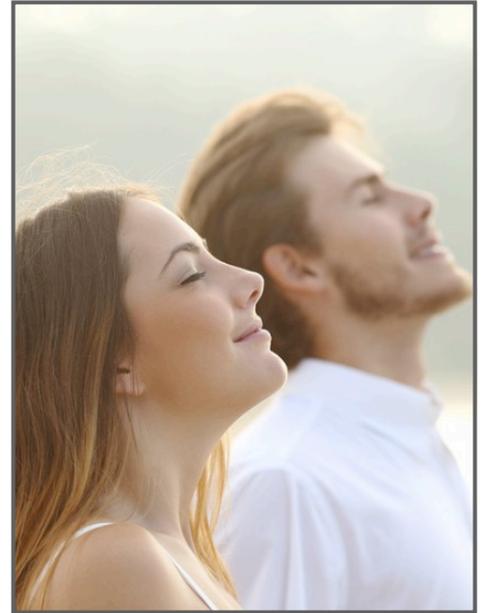
TIP #1: Deep Breathing (4-7-8 Technique)

What exactly is Deep Breathing?

Deep breathing is a relaxation technique performed by purposefully taking slow, deep breaths. When practiced regularly, deep breathing provides both immediate and long-term relief from stress and anxiety.

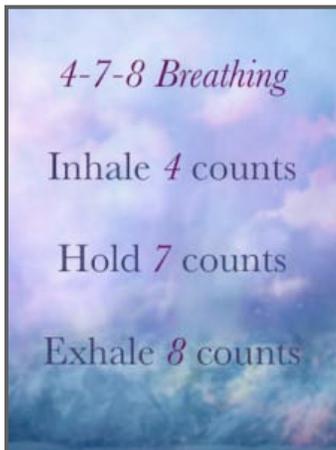
How Deep Breathing Works

During periods of anxiety, the body triggers a set of symptoms called the stress response. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid, heart rate increases, and muscles become tense. In opposition to the stress response is the relaxation response. Breathing becomes deeper and slower, and the symptoms of anxiety fade away. Deep breathing triggers this response.



Instructions

- **Inhale.** Breathe in slowly through your nose for **4** seconds.
- **Pause.** Hold the air in your lungs for **7** seconds.
- **Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for **8** seconds.
Tip: Pucker your lips, as if you are blowing through a straw, to slow your exhalation.
- **Repeat.** Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.



Tips

- **If it isn't working, slow down!** The most common mistake is breathing too fast. Time each step in your head, counting slowly as you do so.
- **Counting out your breaths serves a second purpose.** It takes your mind off the source of your anxiety. Whenever you catch your mind wandering, simply return your focus to counting.
- **The times we use for each step are suggestions, and can be lengthened or decreased.** Lengthen the time if it feels natural to do so, or decrease the time if you feel discomfort.

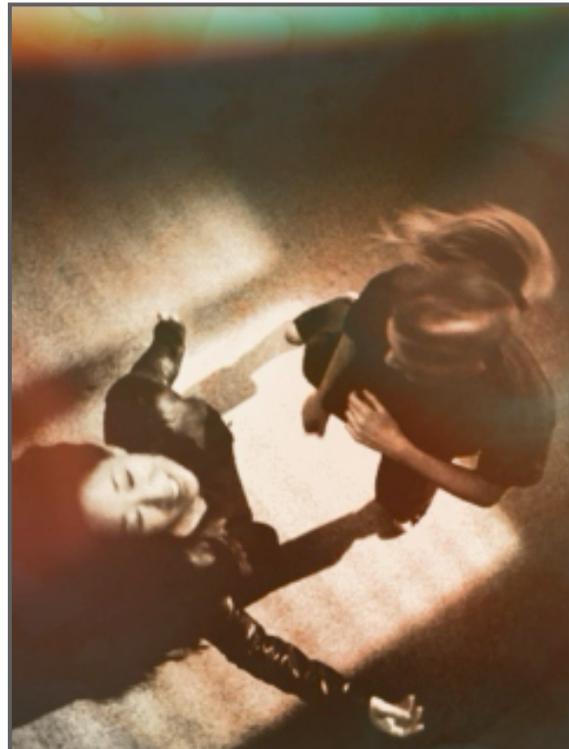
Tip #2: Get Up and Get Moving

Worrying over an issue without creating a solution will not help you solve the problem. It may in fact make you less likely to act by feeding your anxiety. When your mind is stuck in a loop, you can interrupt it by getting up and moving around or doing a different task or activity. When you sit back down, you should have a different perspective.

I recommend trying to dance it out! On crazy days, the mental and physical break of throwing an impromptu dance party can be a life saver. Play your favorite tunes and try out some silly moves in your living room or office (just make sure the door is closed!). Moving your body and singing along is a great way to shake off all that built-up muscle tension... and it releases endorphins!

Now I recognize that dancing it out may not be your thing, so let me suggest another way to get moving. You can also try jumping or bouncing it out! It can decrease stress hormones like cortisol, and increase endorphins which are your body's feel-good chemicals. Also just the physical activity of bouncing and having so much fun can take your mind off your problems.

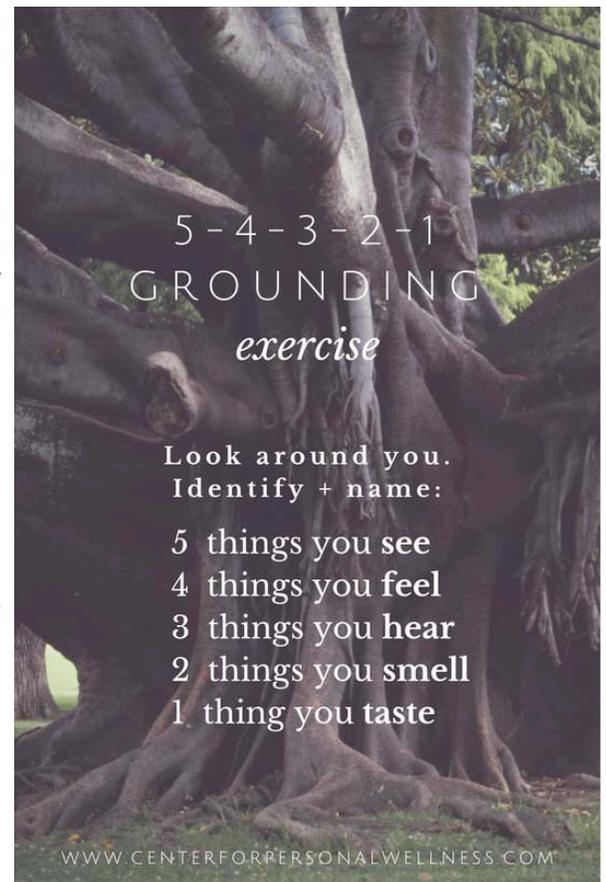
Have an exercise ball, a mattress or trampoline? In the morning, start your day off on the right foot by getting some good endorphins flowing. Bouncing gently up and down on an exercise ball stimulates your spinal cord and releases several kinds of "happy hormones" into your system.



TIP #3: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. This technique can help interrupt the automatic catastrophic thinking that's fueling the anxiety. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses. Taking these 5 steps might not be overnight magic but can significantly help reduce symptoms of anxiety and other unwanted emotions or thoughts.

- **What are 5 things you can see?** Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.
- **What are 4 things you can feel?** Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.
- **What are 3 things you can hear?** Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.
- **What are 2 things you can smell?** Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a nice smell either: maybe there's an overflowing trash can or sewer.
- **What is 1 thing you can taste?** Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. "Taste" the air to see how it feels on your tongue.



The numbers for each sense are only a guideline. Feel free to do more or less of each. Also, try this exercise while doing an activity like washing dishes, listening to music, or going for a walk.

These five steps are a way to ground yourself in the NOW! Take you out of your head and help stop you flooded thoughts. In moments of anxiety or triggered trauma it is important to stay present focused to help find symptom relief. Hopefully this coping technique can help you or someone you know stay present, stay grounded, and stay healthy.



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Are you ready for more?

If this guide has inspired you to take even more action, then give us a call. Our counseling, workshops, and coaching services are each designed to give you supportive and personalized guidance. This customized approach helps you get the most out of working with the Center for Personal Wellness, no matter what service you choose.

If you are ready to get a helping hand and take your life to the next level, please visit our website and let's get started today.

<http://www.centerforpersonalwellness.com/contact.html>