

# Dealing with Anxiety

*Do you feel a sense of dread, tension, racing heart, upset stomach, difficulty swallowing, back and neck aches?*



## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry. They may also have physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat.

## Tips to Manage Anxiety and Stress

1. Take a time-out. Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or learn relaxation techniques. Stepping back from the problem helps clear your head. Get involved. Volunteer or find another way to be active in your community, which creates a support network and gives you a break from everyday stress.
2. Eat well-balanced meals. Do not skip any meals. Do keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand. Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks.
3. Get enough sleep. When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest.
4. Exercise daily to help you feel good and maintain your health. Check out the fitness tips below.
5. Take deep breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly. Count to 10 slowly. Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.
6. Do your best. Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn't possible, be proud of however close you get.
7. Accept that you cannot control everything. Put your stress in perspective: Is it really as bad as you think?
8. Welcome humor. A good laugh goes a long way. Maintain a positive attitude. Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.
9. Learn what triggers your anxiety. Is it work, family, school, or something else you can identify? Write in a journal when you're feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern.
10. Talk to someone. Tell friends and family you're feeling overwhelmed, and let them know how they can help you. Talk to a physician or therapist for professional help.

## Anxiety Myths

**Anxiety Myth No. 1: Anxiety isn't a "real" illness.**

Fact: Some anxiety is natural (and can even be helpful), but an anxiety disorder is an extreme form of anxiety that causes impairment, and it's a very real illness.

**Anxiety Myth No. 2: A panic attack can make you lose control or pass out.**

Fact: Fainting usually occurs from a drop in blood pressure, which doesn't occur during a panic attack.

**Anxiety Myth No. 3: Someone with anxiety should avoid situations that cause stress.**

Fact: First, that's impossible. Second, viewing yourself as fragile only tends to lead to more anxiety. Remember that you can be anxious and still accomplish what has to be done.

**Anxiety Myth No. 4: Some people are just worrywarts and can't be treated.**

Fact: Though there's probably a genetic component to anxiety, effective treatments, from medication to various types of therapy, can help get it under control.

**Anxiety Myth No. 5: Anxiety disorders are not very common.**

Fact: About 18 percent of American adults - nearly one in five - experience some type of anxiety disorder in any given year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

**Anxiety Myth No. 6: All I need is a little cocktail or some pot to get through this.**

Fact: Self-medicating is common among people with anxiety disorders, but it's not an effective treatment

**Anxiety Myth No. 7: Therapy for my anxiety will take forever. Years, probably.**

Fact: You can start to see improvement with just a few therapy sessions.

*\*(10 Anxiety Myths Debunked. Retrieved from: <http://www.everydayhealth.com/anxiety/10-anxiety-myths-debunked.aspx>)*

**To talk with a Bucks Counselor, call 215.968.8189 or email [counseling@bucks.edu](mailto:counseling@bucks.edu) to schedule an appointment.**

**It's FREE and confidential.**