

Stress BUSTERS

Whether you have normal anxiety or an anxiety disorder, these strategies will help you cope:

Exercise. Physical activity helps your body and mind. Go to the gym. Take a jog. Go for a walk. Do yoga. Play Frisbee. Just get moving!

Eat a balanced diet. Don't skip meals. Try to eat from all of the food groups, and try to stay away from caffeine (minimize soda or coffee). Caffeine can trigger anxiety and panic attacks.

Limit alcohol and stay away from illegal drugs. Alcohol and drugs aggravate anxiety and can also cause panic attacks.

Get involved. Being active in the community creates a support network and gives you a break from your everyday stress.

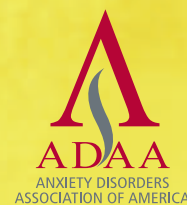
Do your BEST instead of trying to be PERFECT. We all know perfection isn't possible, so be proud of however close you get.

Take a time out. Take a deep breath and count to 10. Stepping back from the problem lets you clear your head. Do yoga. Meditate. Get a massage. Learn relaxation techniques. Listen to music.

Put things in perspective. Think about your situation. Ask yourself whether it's really as bad as you think it is or if you could be blowing it out of proportion.

Talk to someone. Don't let things bottle up to the verge of explosion. Reach out to your roommate, boyfriend, girlfriend or counselor if you're feeling low.

Find out what triggers your anxiety. Take notes or write in a journal when you're feeling anxious or stressed, and then look for patterns.



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For further materials and information about the ADAA Women's Initiative contact:
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
8730 Georgia Ave., Ste. 600
Silver Spring, MD 20910
800-922-8947
www.adaa.org

Got anXxiety?



Get HELP.

www.gotanxiety.org

Front Cover

College can be stressful!

Between school, work, friends, family and being independent for the first time in our lives, we are being pulled in different directions. What's worse, all of these responsibilities take away from the time we might need to take care of ourselves. Add to that the physical changes our bodies are going through (yes, even after puberty), and it's easy to see how we might be anxious.

Anxiety is a normal reaction to life-changing events. We all get stressed out or anxious, but most of us bounce back. But anxiety that is so frequent, intense and uncontrollable that it hinders daily routines, may be a sign of an *anxiety disorder*.

The good news is that there is help.

So what is an anxiety disorder and who can have one?

Anxiety disorders are real, serious and treatable conditions that...

- more than 19 million American men and women are diagnosed with annually.
- almost seven percent of college students report having symptoms.
- can occur at any age but often will surface during a person's teens or twenties.
- are twice as likely to occur in women as men.

In fact, 30 percent of women will have some type of anxiety disorder during their lifetime.

Take the time to figure out whether the anxiety **you are experiencing** is the same anxiety we all have occasionally or whether it is so persistent and severe that it may be an anxiety disorder. Take a self-test at www.gotanxiety.org.

Normal anxiety or an anxiety disorder?

Anxiety is hardwired into all of our brains. It is part of the body's "fight or flight" response. This prepares us to act quickly in the face of danger. It is a normal response to situations of uncertainty, trouble or feeling unprepared. However, if common everyday events bring on severe and persistent anxiety or panic that interferes with life, you may have an anxiety disorder.

What's the Difference?

Normal Anxiety or *Anxiety Disorder*

Occasional worry about circumstantial events, such as an exam or break-up, that may leave you upset

Constant, chronic and unsubstantiated worry that causes significant distress, disturbs your social life and interferes with classes and work

Embarrassment or self-consciousness in the face of an uncomfortable social situation

Avoidance of common social situations for fear of being judged, embarrassed or humiliated

Random case of "nerves" or jitters, dizziness and/or sweating over an important event like an exam or oral presentation

Repeated, random panic attacks or persistent worry/anticipation of another panic attack and feelings of terror or impending doom

Realistic fear of a threatening object, place or situation

Irrational fear or avoidance of an object, place or situation that poses little or no threat of danger

Wanting to be sure that you are healthy and living in a safe, hazard-free environment

Performing uncontrollable, repetitive actions, such as washing your hands repeatedly or checking things over and over

Anxiety, sadness or difficulty sleeping immediately following a traumatic event

Ongoing and recurring nightmares, flashbacks or emotional numbing relating to a traumatic event in your life that occurred several months or years ago

See yourself? If you can relate to any of these *anxiety disorder descriptions*, talk to someone who can help ASAP.

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The ABCs of Anxiety Disorders

“Anxiety disorders” is a broad term; it encompasses six psychiatric (as in **real**, medical) disorders. Although the symptoms of each anxiety disorder vary in different people, what they have in common is they all provoke extreme fear or worry that interferes with a normal lifestyle.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD): Excessive uncontrollable worry about everyday issues, including school, work, money, friends and health

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) – (also called Social Phobia): Avoidance of everyday social situations due to extreme anxiety about being judged by others or behaving in a way that might cause embarrassment or ridicule

Panic Disorder: Severe attacks of terror, which may make a woman feel like she is having a heart attack or is going crazy, for no apparent reason

Specific Phobias: Intense fear of an object, place or situation, such as riding in elevators, driving on highways or heights, that leads to an avoidance of the object or situation; a woman with a specific phobia will typically recognize that her fear is irrational and inappropriate for the circumstance

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD): Persistent, recurring thoughts (obsessions) that reflect exaggerated anxiety or fears and manifest as repetitive behaviors or rituals (compulsions); for example, the uncontrollable need to scrub your hands repeatedly or the insistence on absolute neatness and order

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Several months or years after a traumatic life experience, avoidance, detachment, difficulty sleeping and concentrating, and the need to relive the traumatic event

Anxiety disorders are
**real, serious and
treatable.**

Anxiety Disorders Can Happen to Anyone

Panic Disorder

Sarah had just finished her first round of finals in college. Suddenly, a huge wave of terror swept over her. Her heart began to pound and she couldn't breathe. She felt as if she had left her body and her world was closing in on her. She thought she might be dying. When the feelings passed as quickly as they came on, she was relieved. But when it happened again the next day and the day after that, her roommate took her to the campus health center where they suggested she check out her university's counseling center. One of the therapists there explained to Sarah that she had **panic disorder**. She continued seeing the therapist and also went to a self-help group where she met other students with panic disorder. Eventually, she learned to control and cope with her panic attacks.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Emily was late for class again because she was sure she left on her flat iron and forgot to lock the door. It was the sixth time today she checked. She had no idea why she felt the need to keep doing the same things over and over until she heard about **OCD** in her Psychology class. Her professor was able to recommend a psychologist who, with treatment, helped her control her checking habits.

Social Phobia (SAD)

Taylor had always been shy—rarely participating in class discussions and avoiding parties. But when she turned down going to her best friend's 21st birthday party, she knew her problem was more than just normal shyness. Coincidentally, she came across an article about **social phobia** and realized that she fit the description. She was referred to a psychiatrist and a social worker. By combining medication and cognitive behavioral therapy (a specific type of psychotherapy), Taylor learned to confront and participate in social events she used to avoid. Her commitment to help others motivated Taylor to begin a support group on campus.

You are not alone.
Tell someone—a friend,
a professor, a counselor.
Get help.

Treating Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders treatment may involve therapy or medication or a combination of both. The good news is treatment works! With time and patience, up to 90 percent of people who obtain proper care from a health professional will recover and go on to live full and productive lives.

It is important that you get help **NOW**. Stop by your campus health or counseling center to ask about their counseling services. If you are nervous about doing this alone bring a friend along. Many universities offer free one-on-one counseling sessions for students, as well as group sessions led by a professional or a trained peer. Both can be extremely helpful. Or, you may choose to see your pediatrician or family physician, who may be able to treat you or recommend a professional who specializes in anxiety disorders (a psychiatrist, psychologist, clinical social worker, counselor or psychiatric nurse). Regardless of *where* you seek treatment, it is crucial that you are comfortable with *who* is treating you and *how* you are being treated.

Help a Friend

If someone close to you has an anxiety disorder, here are some ways you can help:

Learn about the disorder. Understanding what your friend or roommate is going through will help you give support, as well as keep your worry under control. The Anxiety Disorders Association of America (www.getanxiety.org) can help you learn about the disorders and find a therapist.

Realize and accept stressful periods. Modify your expectations of how your friend *should* act and be sure to be extra supportive during difficult times.

Remember everyone experiences anxiety differently. Be tolerant, supportive and non-judgmental.

Be encouraging and don't get discouraged. Give praise for even the smallest accomplishment. Stay positive.

Talk to someone. Being supportive all the time is difficult, so make sure you have someone—a roommate, friend, family member or counselor—to support *you*.