

OVERCOMING ANXIETY

A GUIDE TO
42 PROVEN
STRATEGIES



PROFOUND ANXIETY SOLUTIONS 

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OVERCOMING ANXIETY: A GUIDE TO 42 PROVEN STRATEGIES

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Overcoming Anxiety: A Guide to 42 Proven Strategies

ABOUT US

Profound Anxiety Solutions was created to provide helpful information about anxiety, along with expert guidance, strategies and resources to guide you along the path to overcoming anxiety.

We believe that overcoming anxiety is possible for **everyone**, no matter how bad it may seem or how long you've been dealing with it.

We also believe you can gain relief from anxiety in a reasonable amount of time by following an integrative path to healing and using techniques and strategies that work.

We know anxiety first hand. And we know the pain, frustration and fear that comes with it. The strategies we suggest come from years of experience; researching and applying what works.

We believe we are the best resource for anxiety available today. We genuinely want to help everyone we can.

You are not alone. We are here to help. You can reach us 24/7 at support@profoundanxiety.com

Our mission is to help you manage, control and overcome anxiety.

Ready to take the first step?

INTRODUCTION

No matter where you are in life right now, there is a path to overcoming anxiety.

However daunting the task or far away relief may seem - there are proven strategies that anyone can use to overcome anxiety, panic, obsessive thinking, chronic worry and fear.

In our list of 42 proven strategies for anxiety, we will outline different strategies you can use on your path to overcoming anxiety. These strategies are divided into different areas of approach.

The areas of approach we will be discussing will include:

- *Diet & Health*
- *Supplements, Herbs & Medications*
- *Therapy*
- *Techniques & Practices*
- *Anxiety Tools & Technology*
- *Life Skills & Life Changes*
- *Additional Anxiety Support*

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Trying one strategy or approach may not be enough to overcome anxiety completely. We recommend combining strategies from several different approaches to form an integrative plan to improve your life.

Being aware of the areas of your life that need the most work can help you decide which strategies might be best for you.

If you already know your diet is bad and you have trouble relaxing and you constantly worry - focusing on improving your diet, relaxation techniques and worry reduction techniques first can be an effective plan.

Not every strategy will work for every person nor is there any need to use all 42 strategies (obviously).

Some strategies can be extremely beneficial for some but unnecessary for others. Medication is a good example of this.

Other strategies may not be economically feasible for many - such as psychotherapy or EMDR. So choose what best fits your life, your level of anxiety and your current situation.

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Below we'll go over each strategy and their benefits. We have already gone in-depth on many of these topics on our website.

I have provided additional resources for nearly every strategy in this guide if you want to dive deeper into a particular strategy.

Links to our articles are provided for articles we have available on our website. Unlike other websites, our articles are extremely in-depth and can be used as guides for a specific topic, meant to provide everything you need to know on that topic.

If you do not see an article on our website on a particular strategy discussed here, rest assured we will be publishing one soon.

As much as possible, I've tried to include FREE resources whenever I could, which includes links to free meditations, guides and other resources that can be profoundly helpful.

I have also included links to online courses for those who are ready to begin working on a particular area of their life, with a comprehensive, step-by-step program.

Every strategy, resource, program and approach is validated and proven effective and/or something we use ourselves.

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The strategies on this list are not in a particular order but are grouped by area of approach.

Certain strategies and areas of approach will be more beneficial to some people than others.

In addition, some strategies shouldn't be ignored and are essential to truly overcoming anxiety, such as those in the "Diet & Health" section.

While others are optional and can be used more as an add-on to more formal strategies, such as those in the "Additional Anxiety Support" section.

Now let's dive in, starting with one of the most essential areas of approach, diet and health.

Part 1

Area of Approach: Diet & Health

1.IMPROVE YOUR DIET

Our diet is one of the most important contributors to our anxiety - but it is often overlooked.

Even though what we eat is right in front of our faces - *literally* - we often fail to see the connection between how we feel and what we consume on a daily basis.

We often ignore the most obvious things in life.

A poor diet leads to poor health, but not just poor physical health - poor mental health as well. **What we eat affects how we feel .**

Our brain and body rely on the foods we eat for essential vitamins, minerals and amino acids.

These vitamins, minerals and amino acids are essential for a healthy brain and for healthy nervous system function.

When our brain and body become low in these essential nutrients, we produce less of the neurotransmitters we need to feel calm, happy and able to face the challenges of life.

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Eating healthy and avoiding excessive amounts of certain foods and ingredients can drastically change how anxious we feel and the intensity of anxiety we experience.

Anxiety producing foods and ingredients include:

- Excessive amounts of caffeine
- Refined sugars
- Processed foods
- Alcohol
- Gluten and other possible food allergies (which cause inflammation)
- Excitotoxins such as aspartame and MSG.

When we are anxious we often attempt to find comfort in the very things that end up making our anxiety worse later on - such as eating a carton of ice cream or drinking excessive amounts of alcohol.

Often the first step to eating healthy is to gain control over our emotional (anxious) eating and substitute unhealthy foods for healthier ones.

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A healthy diet is essential for our overall health and can make a profound difference on our path to overcoming anxiety.

Meditation or therapy will likely have subpar results if our body/brain isn't getting the necessary nutrients it needs to function properly.

Unless you are already eating healthy, this is an essential strategy that should be on everyone's list for overcoming anxiety.

Resources:

A few free resources for developing a better understanding of nutrition and eating healthy include: nutritionfacts.org & eatingwell.com

A good book for understanding the connection between what we eat and anxiety is: [Anti-Anxiety Food Solution](#) by Trudy Scott

If access to or the cost of healthy foods is an issue, you can check out popular sites like Thrive Market, which offers organic, non-GMO, gluten-free and/or diet specific (paleo, vegan, etc.) foods for 25%-50% less than most grocery stores:

[Thrive Market](#)

If you're serious about eating healthy and learning how to make optimal food choices, you can check the "Food Fundamentals" course by MindBodyGreen, which features 85 video lessons taught by doctors and other experts in the field:

["Food Fundamentals" Online Course](#)

2. EXERCISE

Like our diet, exercise has many positive benefits beyond just our physical health. Research has shown that exercise can improve our psychological health as well. This includes our stress and anxiety levels.

Regular exercise has also been shown to improve our cognitive functions such as memory and focus and promote clearer thinking.

I'm sure you are well aware of the health benefits of exercise, it's pretty obvious - but you may not be aware of just how effective exercise can be for psychological and cognitive health.

In fact I would say, that physical exercise is one of the most effective strategies for reducing anxiety (and depression).

Unfortunately, physical exercise is often avoided by those of us with anxiety, especially if it involves working out in front of others.

When I finally decided to join a gym many years ago, I would experience near panic at the thought of working out around others and would often make excuses not to go.

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After a period of initial anxiety, I actually began looking forward to my workout sessions.

In a pretty short period of time, I noticed a significant reduction in my mental and physical tension, clearer thoughts, reduced anxiety and nervousness, and I felt more grounded and connected in my body instead of lost in my head.

Over time I also felt an overall sense of health, strength and well being.

Physical exercises such as jogging, biking, stretching, swimming or weight lifting (*which I personally recommend*) can all help to expend much of the excess energy many of us have; reducing inner tension and leaving us calm, grounded and centered afterward.

Exercise can also have a healing/balancing effect on the brain, body and nervous system.

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According to the Mayo Clinic, exercise can prevent or improve many the following health concerns:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Many types of cancer
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- High Blood Pressure
- Arthritis
- Metabolic Syndrome

Exercise also has the following benefits:

- Controls Weight
- Improves Mood
- Balances Energy
- Improves Sleep
- Increases Confidence
- Promotes Sociability
- Improves Sexual Arousal and can prevent ED

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Ok, ok I think you get the point. Exercise is good for you.

If you're looking for a few strategies to add to your arsenal for overcoming anxiety make exercise one of them, period.

We have an entire section in the works dedicated to diet and health including recommended exercises for anxiety which we will be releasing soon.

Resources:

Working out at a gym (ie. doing moderate to high intensity workouts) is going to be the most effective option for anxiety and overall health. However, if you don't have access to a gym for whatever reason (money, distance, time) there are plenty of alternatives.

Running, walking, and bike riding can all be effective without the need for a gym membership.

There are also countless online programs available where you can take live classes or stream hundreds or even thousands of workout videos created by personal trainers and other professionals.

A few of the more popular programs include:

Fitness Blender (which is absolutely FREE) : fitnessblender.com

Grokker (grokker.com)

Daily Burn (dailyburn.com)

3. RULE OUT BIOLOGICAL CAUSES OF ANXIETY

Underlying biological factors; such as disease, illness, infection, injury, diet, or deficient amounts of essential vitamins, minerals, hormones or neurotransmitters; can play a significant role in our anxiety.

Ruling out biological causes of our anxiety is important, especially if we've been dealing with anxiety for an extended period of time.

This means speaking with our doctor and ordering tests where necessary.

Blood tests, exams and other methods can be essential for ruling out underlying biological factors that may be contributing to or causing our anxiety and/or panic attacks.

Specific issues such as an overactive thyroid (*Graves disease*), can lead to extreme levels of anxiety.

Without proper testing, we may experience anxiety for years without knowing the true underlying cause.

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If there is an underlying biological cause for our anxiety we may be taking prescribed medications for our anxiety, such as antidepressants, without addressing the core cause.

In these cases, we are essentially taking medications needlessly.

This is a topic too rich to go into too much detail here but we've created an exhaustive in-depth guide to biological causes of anxiety on our site.

Resources:

[Biological Causes of Anxiety: Root Causes of Anxiety Part 2](#)

4. SLEEP

Like diet and exercise, sleep is fundamental to our overall mental, emotional and physical health.

When we don't get enough sleep and/or we don't reach the deepest stages of sleep, over time it will take a toll on our health.

Lack of sleep greatly reduces our ability to handle stress, can cause or worsen our anxiety, impairs cognitive functions such as focus and memory, lowers our immune system, greatly reduces our energy levels and can have many other negative effects on our overall health.

The longer we go without regular, deep sleep, the more these areas tend to suffer.

Insomnia, poor sleep habits and sleep disturbances are common problems for those of us with anxiety.

Whether we're too anxious to fall asleep on time, constantly wake up in the middle of the night or we are simply overstressed and overworked; it's important to improve this vital area in our lives.

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Healthy sleep habits include:

- getting 7-9 hours of solid, deep sleep every night
- reaching the deepest (healing) states of sleep each night (*which means not constantly waking up in the middle of the night*)
- establishing a sleep routine (making it easier to fall asleep)
- going to bed and waking up around the same time each day (*this keeps our body's circadian rhythm normal*)

The above are just simple suggestions but they can have a profound effect on our lives. Improving my sleep turned out to be one of the best things I ever did for my overall health.

If you have trouble sleeping due to anxiety, worry, stress or any other issues, the use of certain herbs and supplements can help.

As can many other strategies such as exercise, meditation, avoiding caffeine and other stimulants and relaxation techniques.

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Resources:

We've developed a brainwave entrainment program designed specifically for those with anxiety to help you quiet the mind, fall asleep faster and reach deeper, more restorative states of sleep, as part of our "Profound Series," you can check it out here:

Profound Sleep

A good book on insomnia is *"Say Goodnight to Insomnia,"* which provides a six week program for insomnia, developed at Harvard Medical School

Say Good Night to Insomnia by Gregg Jacobs PH.D.

Dr Jacobs also has an online program for overcoming insomnia which uses CBT for insomnia or CBT-I. His program is considered the "Gold-Standard" CBT-I program since 2005.

<https://www.cbtforinsomnia.com/>

Another online program is Sleepio, which is a 6 week program designed to help people fall asleep faster, stay asleep longer and feel better during the day.

Sleepio

5. GUT HEALTH

Gut health has become an increasingly popular topic in the health community. Popular buzz words like "*leaky gut*" or "*candida*" are thrown around everywhere online.

If you've visited any health websites in the past couple of years you've probably seen articles on these topics.

Gut health and digestive health supplements have also become increasingly popular.

Probiotics, digestive enzymes, kombucha, bone broth and other food and supplements aimed at improving gut health and fixing leaky gut, are now staples in the alternative health and supplement industry.

Some may be quick to dismiss leaky gut and other gut health issues as another health fad. In fact, many traditional physicians have never even heard of the concept of leaky gut or the relationship between gut health and many health issues .

But the relationship between our gut health and our overall mental and physical health shouldn't be dismissed so quickly.

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The gut is called our "2nd brain" after all. And recent research has begun to prove the relationship between gut health (*and gut health issues such as leaky gut*) and inflammation in the brain and body.

To be fair, physicians in the alternative and integrative medicine community have known about this connection for decades.

The Ultramind Solution by Dr. Mark Hyman, was published in 2009 and discusses the direct role between gut health, leaky gut and inflammation in the brain and body.

And there were many others before and after that one.

The gut is a master filter. Not only for the basic nutrients we need but for removing toxins and bacteria from the foods we consume.

Leaky gut (although sounding like a health fad phrase) is actually referring to the permeability of the gut and intestines.

When permeability is in bad shape we have "leaky gut" which means those toxins, bacteria and even undigested food particles end up where they shouldn't be, such as in our blood.

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This can lead to inflammation throughout the body.

Inflammation is linked to many, many different health issues including anxiety and depression.

Increased gut permeability (*leaky gut*) also plays a role in GI conditions such as IBS and Crohn's disease.

Recent studies have also linked leaky gut and overall gut health with autoimmune diseases, fibromyalgia, arthritis, allergies and even mental illness.

If you have anxiety along with chronic inflammation, brain fog, joint or muscular pain and/or digestive issues, looking into your gut health may be a wise decision.

Improving the health of our gut can reduce inflammation (a leading cause of anxiety) as well as reduce many of the common issues of poor gut health mentioned above.

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Resources:

There many different websites and online resources available that discuss gut health and many mind/body issues cause by poor gut health. Some are good, some are filled a bit too much with unproven science.

An excellent introduction to the topic is the book *10% Human*, which lays out how our body's microbes directly effect our weight, immune system and how poor gut microbiome can lead to issues such as autism, obesity and mental illness.

[10% Human: How Your Body's Microbes Hold the Key to Health and Happiness](#) by Alanna Collen

We have an article in the works on this important topic where we will discuss the relationship between gut health and anxiety and what we can do to improve our overall gut health.

Part 2

Area of Approach: Supplements, Herbs & Medications

6. SUPPLEMENTS

There are many supplements available online and over the counter that can help with anxiety.

These supplements can increase or balance important neurotransmitters in the brain such as GABA and serotonin in similar ways to prescription medications.

Many people find supplements to be an effective alternative to medications without the side effects.

Amino acid supplements such as *Tryptophan* and *5-HTP* can increase the amount of available serotonin in the brain; reducing anxiety and improving sleep.

Popular supplements *GABA* and *Theanine* are also amino acids but work on increasing GABA levels in the brain; calming the mind, reducing mental and physical tension and leading to an overall reduction in anxiety.

If you're looking for alternatives to prescription medications or feel low serotonin or GABA may be an issue for you, supplements can be an effective strategy for anxiety.

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(Always talk to your doctor before taking any supplements or coming off of medications).

Resources:

If you want to learn more about supplements - how they work, potential benefits and the brands we recommend - check out our in-depth guide to supplements:

[Herbs & Supplements for Anxiety: An In-Depth Guide to Anxiety Supplements](#)

7. MEDICATION

When anxiety interferes with our lives or becomes unbearable, when we are too anxious to sit for meditation or our minds are too frantic for therapy to be successful; prescription medication may be a necessary strategy for getting our anxiety under control and calming ourselves enough to use other strategies.

Certain medications can help to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and allow us to take the necessary actions we need to take.

When we are immobilized by fear and anxiety for a long period of time (months/years), medications may provide the necessary support we need. At the very least until we are able to use other strategies to cope and eventually overcome our anxiety without them.

There are different types and classes of medications available that can help reduce anxiety symptoms.

Not everyone needs medication, but I am personally of the opinion that medication can be beneficial for some people either short-term or long term.

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I believe medication such as an SSRI can profoundly help those with the following anxiety issues:

- moderate to severe OCD or intrusive compulsive thoughts
- severe anxiety that greatly interferes with life - such as extreme avoidance and isolation, cognitive impairment caused by anxiety or frequent panic attacks
- moderate to severe depression along with anxiety

Anxiety medications can be a lifesaver for many people but they are definitely not without possible side effects and other potentially dangerous effects.

The possibility of side effects and other issues needs to be taken into account before starting a medication.

Always ask your doctor before starting any new medication, changing medications, or stopping any medications.

Be sure to ask questions about a particular medication such as:

"What are the potential side effects?"

"Is there a potential for withdrawal if I stop taking it?"

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And never let a doctor push medications on you that you are hesitant to take.

Resources:

If you want to learn more about medications for anxiety, we have created an in-depth guide covering everything you should know; the different types of medications, how they work, potential benefits, side effects and more:

[The Guide to Medications for Anxiety: Everything You Should Know](#)

8. HERBS

Herbs and herbal supplements can be an effective option for anxiety. Whether you're looking for a natural alternative to prescription medications or simply looking to reduce anxiety and stress.

Herbs have been used effectively for hundreds (if not thousands) of years for many different ailments of the body and the mind.

In fact, many modern medicines come from isolating certain herbs and plants.

Two popular examples are, *Aspirin*, which is modeled after a compound found in the white willow plant and the heart medication *Digoxin*, which is isolated from foxglove.

Research into the effectiveness of herbs for stress, anxiety and depression has increased over the past few decades.

The popularity and use of herbs and herbal supplements has also seen a dramatic increase as people continue to search for effective, safe, natural ways to deal with stress, anxiety and depression.

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Many herbs can affect neurotransmitters in a similar way to prescription medications without the harsh negative side effects.

Herbs such as Kava affect the GABA receptors in the brain promoting relaxation and calm in much the same way as prescription benzodiazepines.

Adaptogenic herbs such as Ashwagandha can help us better handle stress, reduce anxiety and help balance the nervous system.

Many herbs that help with anxiety also have additional benefits that most prescription medications do not, such as cognitive enhancement, increased vitality, better immune system function and anti-inflammatory benefits.

Resources:

There are many herbs available that have been shown effective for anxiety. You can check out our 5 favorite herbs for anxiety in our article:

[The 5 Best Herbs for Anxiety: Our Favorite Herbs, Extracts & Adaptogens](#)

9. CBD

Cannabidiol, otherwise known as CBD, is an active ingredient of the cannabis plant that has been studied for many different uses and potential benefits including:

- promoting calm and relaxation
- reducing anxiety
- reducing depression
- reducing inflammation
- reducing the pain of Fibromyalgia
- the treatment of migraines
- reducing chronic pain
- the treatment of seizures
- improving sleep
- possible treatment for PTSD

With the loosening of the laws surrounding cannabis, including full legalization of hemp in all 50 states and legalization or decriminalization of marijuana in most states in the U.S., there has been a significant increase in the popularity, availability and research into CBD.

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Unlike marijuana, CBD doesn't cause a person to feel high or cause cognitive impairment, making it a potentially effective option for anxiety without interfering with one's ability to work or perform other tasks.

So far, studies on CBD have shown it to be relatively safe among most age groups with little to no side effects; although it can cause drowsiness, dry mouth and GI issues in some people.

CBD has many scientifically confirmed benefits for the brain, body and nervous system including:

- neuroprotective
- antiepileptic
- anxiolytic (reduces the symptoms of anxiety)
- anti-inflammatory
- analgesic (reduces pain)
- antitumor
- anti-asthmatic (can prevent asthma attacks)
- antipsychotic

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If you're interested in CBD, please check your local and state laws.

Although hemp is legal in all 50 states, marijuana is legal on a state by state basis, which can make the sale and availability of CBD somewhat confusing.

CBD that comes from the hemp plant is technically legal in all 50 states. CBD that comes from marijuana plants will only be available to purchase based on your state's marijuana laws.

Resources:

If you're looking for an effective CBD product online, the company we typically recommend is Sunday Scaries.

(Don't let their gimmicky looking website fool you, they offer high quality products that have been featured in Forbes, Oprah.com, Huffington Post and others)

It's hemp-based so completely legal in all 50 states. They also offer a 100% money-back guarantee (which is another reason we recommend them). Their products are effective for anxiety, stress and insomnia.

Sunday Scaries

Part 3

Area of Approach: Therapy

10. PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy is any form of therapy done by a trained professional that assists those with many different types of issues (*including anxiety, depression, psychosis, and bipolar disorder*) through psychological rather than medical practice.

Psychological practices generally focus on the contents of our minds; thoughts, beliefs, fears, dreams, the unconscious, etc. and/or our behaviors.

Medical practices generally focus on disease, injury or imbalance to specific organs of the body or the overall body in general. The goal of medical practice is to correct/fix this disease, injury or imbalance.

There are many forms of Psychotherapy that have proven to be extremely effective for all types of anxiety (and depression).

I've personally found that simply talking with someone who has an empathetic ear and a non-judgemental attitude, very effective for improving mental and emotional health and healing.

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Some of the more effective forms of Psychotherapy for anxiety include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Gestalt Therapy
- Psychoanalysis
- Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Psychotherapy is about more than just talking to someone about our problems, it's about releasing the mental and emotional baggage and tension we've carried around with us for years.

It's about learning and developing the skills we need to handle/face the challenges in our lives.

Psychotherapy is also about the relationship with our therapist; trusting and confiding in another and knowing we are accepted and supported, where we may otherwise have felt judged and alone in the world.

All of this combines to make Psychotherapy an invaluable strategy for leading happier, more fulfilling, less anxious lives.

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Resources:

If you're interested in finding a therapist to work with we recommend checking out the "Find A Therapist" resource on the Psychology Today website, where you can search for therapists nearest you:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists?search=>

If you don't have time or access to a therapist, we will be discussing online therapy options below, with links to resources.

We have an extensive article in the works on Psychotherapy and Anxiety coming soon.

11. COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

Although Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been around since the 1960s, it has garnered a lot of attention and popularity over the past decade.

Recent research confirming CBT's ability to help those with anxiety; particularly generalized anxiety (GAD), social anxiety and panic attacks; has earned CBT the reputation for being one of the most effective forms of therapies for anxiety.

CBT is often considered to be a combination of behavioral therapy (which focuses on the relationship between our problems and our thoughts and behaviors) and traditional Psychotherapy (which focuses on our beliefs, thoughts patterns, the meaning we place on our thoughts, and past events that shaped our lives).

Many CBT practitioners implement some degree of Mindfulness practice into their therapy. Some practitioners may also borrow techniques from other practices, such as ACT, as well.

The main purpose and goal of CBT is to allow the client to become aware and more clearly understand how their thoughts and beliefs are shaping their behaviors, feelings and reactions to life.

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By directly challenging and correcting our misinterpretations and distortions we can develop more positive and useful thought patterns and behaviors in life.

Many of the techniques and strategies we discuss on our site come from CBT, such as "*Scheduled Worry Time*." So you can find CBT techniques throughout various articles.

Resources:

There are many books and resources available to learn about and practice CBT.

Two books we recommend, which include CBT worksheets are:

- **The Anxiety & Worry Workbook: The Cognitive Behavioral Solution** by David A Clark and Aaron T Beck
- **The Cognitive Behavioral Workbook for Anxiety: A Step by Step Program** by William Knaus and Jon Carlson

If you prefer to learn CBT online with worksheets, a learning program and direct access to a CBT therapist check out:

<https://www.online-therapy.com/>

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If you prefer to find a CBT therapist near you, you can search in the "Find a Therapist" feature on Psychology Today's website. (*The page below defaults to the United States, if you're in a different country simply go to the page and change the country at the top*)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists?search=>

We have an in-depth article on how to use CBT for anxiety that provides a brief introduction to CBT, along with worksheets you can download and a detailed guide to 12 of the most effective CBT techniques you can use right NOW.

You can check out our article here:

[How to Use CBT for Anxiety: 12 CBT Techniques You Can Use Right Now \(with Worksheets\)](#)

12. ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY (ACT)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), is a form of therapy that formed from traditional behavioral therapy and CBT. But ACT takes an approach that is different than either of the therapies that influenced it.

ACT has at its core; acceptance and commitment. Acceptance of what we think and feel and what has happened in the past. Commitment to change and take action in the present.

The ultimate goal of ACT is psychological flexibility : the ability to adapt to situations with openness while taking actions based on our own values .

Unlike many other therapies that promote changing our negative thoughts, **ACT promotes acceptance of our thoughts and what is occurring at the moment so that the thoughts pass by and we move on .**

Rather than clinging to our thoughts or setting up a battle in our minds to change our thoughts (*which is essentially clinging to our thoughts*), the thoughts come and then the thoughts go.

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Mindfulness is a central part of ACT.

Developing the habit of living fully in the present moment with what is arising as it arises (*versus stuck in the past or in the future*) is essential for acceptance.

Being in the present is also essential for cultivating the "*Observer*," (the part of our mind that observes what is happening without judgment).

Being present is also essential for greater happiness and fulfillment in life.

Although ACT uses practices and terms from Eastern meditation traditions (ie; mindfulness, the "observer," etc.), it is a scientifically based therapy, free of any spiritual or religious beliefs.

Those who are drawn to Eastern traditions and/or practice meditation (*such as myself*) often find ACT to be a better fit for them than traditional therapies.

Those who find that trying to change their thoughts is difficult and those who are constantly battling their thoughts may finally find a sense of freedom with ACT.

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Although not as popular as CBT, I personally prefer ACT. But both can be extremely effective, especially under the guidance of a trained professional.

For those interested in ACT; ACT can be done with a trained therapist but it may be difficult to find an ACT therapist depending on where you live.

ACT can also be done on your own. There are books and other resources that can help get you started.

Resources:

RMIT University offers a free audio learning program that teaches some of the basic strategies of ACT with worksheets:

<https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/communication/index.htm>

There are also many great books available, 2 books we recommend to get started with ACT are:

- *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life* by Steven Hayes
- *The Happiness Trap* by Russ Harris

We also have an introduction to ACT in the works that we will have up on our website soon.

13. EMDR

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a revolutionary form of psychotherapy that helps patients heal from trauma and emotional distress quickly, without the need for years of traditional therapy.

EMDR works so quickly in fact, studies have shown that 80%-90% of single trauma victims no longer have PTSD after only three 90 min EMDR sessions. In another study, 77% of combat veterans recovered from PTSD in twelve 50 min sessions.

Compare that to traditional therapy which can take months or even years to gain the same results.

EMDR therapy isn't just for trauma and PTSD however, it can be extremely effective for breaking the patterns of anxiety, OCD and depression as well.

The process of EMDR involves targeting a painful/traumatic memory in the patient, while the patient tracks the deliberate movement of the therapist's hand with their eyes.

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These eye movements are thought to be connected to the biological mechanisms associated with REM sleep

As associations and feelings come up, the patient processes the memory and transforms it on an emotional level.

Often in EMDR sessions once the memory is properly processed, the emotional significance, belief around it, or associations of the memory, shift.

So if someone feels shame, disgust and humiliation around the memory of being sexually abused as a child, this may shift to a new belief/feeling of "*This wasn't my fault but I survived it and I am strong.*"

The best explanation I've found on how EMDR works comes from the EMDR Institute which states:

"...the mind can, in fact, heal from psychological trauma much as the body recovers from physical trauma.... The brain's information processing system naturally moves toward mental health. If the system is blocked or imbalanced by the impact of a disturbing event, the emotional wound festers and can cause intense suffering. Once the block is removed, healing resumes."

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EMDR therapy has been recognized by the American Psychiatric Association, the World Health Organization and the Department of Defense as an effective form of treatment for trauma and other mental health issues.

More and more therapists and clinicians are now using EMDR therapy in their practice.

Resources:

If you're interested in learning more about EMDR therapy or finding a therapist that uses EMDR, check out the website for the EMDR Insitute:

<https://www.emdr.com/>

14. GESTALT THERAPY

Gestalt therapy is a powerful form of psychotherapy developed in the 1940s by Fritz Perls and popular throughout the 1960s, 70s and early 80s.

Although not as popular or well known today, Gestalt therapy methods have influenced many different forms of therapy (including CBT) and are still commonly used among therapists and psychologists.

Gestalt therapy can help those suffering from anxiety, depression, relationship issues, low self-esteem and perceived lack of personal power.

Gestalt therapy can also help with physical issues caused by stress and inner tension such as headaches, back pain and digestive problems.

Techniques such as bodywork, art therapy, dreamwork, role-playing and guided fantasy are often used in Gestalt therapy.

The ultimate goal of Gestalt therapy is to increase self-awareness and uncover and release negative thought patterns, behaviors and other blocks to true self-awareness and self-expression.

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Gestalt therapy is an "experiential" form of therapy rather than a strictly cognitive-based therapy (*such as talk therapy*).

For example; instead of talking about our past problems, we uncover how those problems play themselves out in our lives today, by experiencing the issue directly in the present moment.

This experiential approach to therapy is what makes Gestalt therapy so effective, in my opinion.

We are focusing on our present moment, which is all that there is.

Our present experience is where we continue to hold onto our past, where we limit and sabotage ourselves and the only place where change can happen.

Whether we are obsessing over the past or worrying about the future we are doing it now, in the present moment. This where the change and release need to take place.

With Gestalt therapy, we are focusing on the **how** instead of the **why** . How does our past interfere with our present experience? How do our thoughts limit our freedom? How do we sabotage our relationships with others?

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I am a big proponent of Gestalt therapy and personally find it to be one of the most effective forms of therapy.

Finding a therapist that practices a strict Gestalt approach to therapy may be difficult unless you live in a major city. But many therapists use Gestalt techniques and practices in conjunction with other forms of therapy.

Resources:

If you are interested in finding a therapist trained in Gestalt approaches, you can do a search on the Psychology Today website for a professional near you and then filter by "Types of Therapy"

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists?search=>

If you're interested in learning more about Gestalt Therapy and how it can apply to your life, I recommend checking out one of the original works, written by Fritz Perls.

[Gestalt Therapy Verbatim](#) by Fritz Perls

Or for an updated (newer) resource on Gestalt Therapy check out

[Gestalt Therapy: 100 Key Points](#) by Dave Mann

15. EXPOSURE THERAPY

Many of us try to avoid feeling anxiety whenever we can - this means we often try to avoid the things that make us anxious in the first place.

It may seem to be normal and rational to avoid the things that we fear or that promote anxiety and panic attacks.

But by constantly avoiding these things/people/situations/events, we never move past the fear and anxiety and we severely limit our lives.

Exposure, commonly used in many forms of therapy, encourages the patient to face the things that cause undue anxiety and fear so that he/she can get over them.

Exposure is especially effective for OCD, Social Anxiety, Phobias and Panic Attacks. In each case, we expose ourselves to the thing that is feared, uncomfortable and anxiety-producing.

With OCD it could be exposing our hands to dirt and germs without running to wash them right away.

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With social anxiety, it could be attending public functions or other social situations that make us anxious.

For panic and phobias, it could be exposing ourselves to situations that cause panic attacks or fear.

By exposing ourselves to the situations/things that stir up fear and anxiety we can learn to **feel the anxiety fully** and begin to move past it.

We can begin to see that, while the situation may be uncomfortable or intense - the fear and anxiety (and the situation itself) essentially doesn't hurt us, and after reaching its peak, eventually passes.

Exposure therapy also strives to overcome the use of a "crutch."

This is something we use to deal with anxiety in different situations.

For example, someone with social anxiety may always bring someone with them whenever they go out in public (*they are never alone*). This is their crutch.

A big part of exposure therapy for this person would be to gradually begin exposing themselves to social situations without their crutch; in other words, by themselves.

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Until they eliminate the use of a crutch the anxiety and panic for the situation will never be fully felt.

Other crutches could include: taking pills/meds, mentally distancing ourselves from the experience, distracting ourselves with our cell phones, using alcohol or drugs, or having a backup crutch (*such as using hand sanitizer when we can't fulfill the urge to wash our hands*).

Anything that reduces the experience of feeling the anxiety/discomfort fully can be seen as a crutch.

Over time with repeated exposure, we loosen the fear, anxiety and discomfort around particular anxiety triggers and begin to do things without the previous hesitation, avoidances and fear.

Exposure therapy can be uncomfortable and intense depending on the severity of anxiety, but it works. Leading a life of avoidance - doesn't.

We will be posting an article on exposure and Exposure Therapy in the coming months that will go more in-depth on the things we have discussed.

16. ONLINE THERAPY

Therapy can provide us with the essential skills, support and guidance we often need to overcome anxiety. But what if we don't have time to visit a therapist every week or have access to a therapist in our area?

Online therapy can be a good alternative to in-person therapy.

Being able to speak with a professional about our anxiety, fears and phobias, obsessive thoughts and behaviors and (especially) trauma can lead to breakthroughs we might not have had without help.

A trained therapist can also provide guidance for the steps and strategies necessary to handle and overcome the specific issues we may be dealing with.

There are several online therapy options available each with different pricing and overall structure.

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Resources:

[Online-Therapy.com](https://www.onlinetherapy.com) - is different from most therapy services in that it combines training in addition to traditional counseling , online-therapy offers self-paced training in CBT strategies along with worksheets, a journal, activity planner, yoga and meditation practices and direct access to a trained therapist; making it a better option for those interested in learning and applying CBT strategies on their own while still receiving guidance from a professional (*we've partnered with online-therapy.com to bring our subscribers a **20% discount** when you signup through our link above, the 20% will be automatically applied, no coupon code*)

[BetterHelp](https://www.betterhelp.com): the **world's largest online counseling service** and also one of the best based on customer reviews; BetterHelp connects users with one of over 8,000 therapists based on the therapist that best matches the users need; users have direct access to their therapist 24/7 through messaging, chat, phone and video calls; BetterHelp is an excellent option with recommendations from Psychology Today and Mental Health America

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[TalkSpace.com](https://www.talkspace.com) - is one of the most popular online therapy services with over 1 million active users; like BetterHelp, TalkSpace connects you with a licensed therapist that is available 24/7 via messaging or video calls, Talkspace also has it's own app available for Apple or Android; TalkSpace recently launched a **Psychiatry service** where you can connect with a licensed psychiatrist that can prescribe medications (*which is the only online therapy service that I know of that can do this*)

You can also check out our article on Online Therapy where we discuss the pros and cons of using therapy online vs conventional in-person therapy. We also go into detail and offer our take on the 3 counseling services mentioned above.

<https://profoundanxietysolutions.com/online-anxiety-therapy/>

Part 4

Area of Approach: Techniques & Practices

17. MEDITATION

Meditation can be highly effective for overcoming anxiety. Daily meditation practice has been scientifically proven to reduce many forms of anxiety and depression.

Meditation has many additional benefits as well. Developing a daily practice can promote many mental, emotional, physical and even spiritual benefits and improvements including:

- reduced stress and worry
- greater self-awareness
- improved attention and focus
- improved emotional health
- increased empathy, kindness and compassion
- reduced chronic pain
- lower blood pressure
- connection with something higher/greater than ourselves
- "space" for our thoughts

We have written about meditation and anxiety in-depth already, with a focus on specific techniques and postures, benefits for those with anxiety, how to get started, and a 5 min meditation you can practice right now.

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You can check out that article here:

<https://profoundanxiety.com/meditation-for-anxiety/>

Additional Resources:

For free guided meditations check out Tara Brach's website, where she has posted an extensive number of recorded meditations from her retreats and classes (*available to stream or download 100% free*).

<https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/>

There are many really good online meditation courses available. For one of the best that teaches traditional Insight Meditation (as taught by the Buddha by himself) check out this course by noted teachers Sharon Salzberg and Joseph Goldstein:

soundstrue.com/insight-meditation

We highly recommend meditation and believe everyone should have some type of daily practice, even if it's just 10 mins per day to just sit and watch the breath.

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There is a meditation practice for virtually everyone, whether you prefer a traditional seated mediation practice, lying meditation, guided meditation, Christian contemplative based practices, Sufi practices, Taoist practices, etc. Choose one that is right for you and start a daily practice!

18. RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Taking time each day to relax our mind and body can dramatically shift our daily stress and anxiety levels. The power of relaxation shouldn't be underestimated .

When we are constantly in an anxious state, we often fail to notice how much mental and emotional tension we are actually holding onto.

Over time this constant tension can lead to chronic pain and stiffness, increased stress, anxiety, depression, headaches, and more...

It can be difficult to relax when we are constantly battling with anxiety, but we can learn how to consciously allow our mind and body to relax and make a profound difference in our lives.

Learning to relax is just like learning any other technique we will discuss in this book. We have to practice the techniques and we have to do it regularly.

You've likely spent years worrying, holding onto fears and past traumas, experiencing constant tension and anxiety; while spending very little time relaxing.

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Relaxation is something that needs to be re-established as part of a daily routine.

Instead of holding onto that tension, that anxiety, that stress, that worry, day after day and night after night - take time each day to relax your mind and body and let it all go.

Free yourself 10 mins at a time.

Resource:

We've developed a brainwave entrainment program specifically for those with anxiety to help you experience deep states of relaxation, and reduce stress.

You can check it out here:

[Profound Relaxation](#)

For 6 different relaxation techniques, you can use right now to relax the mind and body and reduce anxiety and stress, check out our article:

[Relax the Mind & Body: Relaxation Techniques for Anxiety & Stress](#)

19. BREATHING TECHNIQUES & BREATHWORK

The breath is essential to life and how we breathe is fundamentally related to how we feel; both physically and mentally.

When we are afraid, we take rapid, shallow breaths from the chest.

When we are anxious or angry we may even unconsciously hold our breath.

When we are comfortable and relaxed we take slow, deep breaths from the belly or diaphragm. Our belly expands and contracts, we are grounded in the body.

Many of us breathe with shallow, short breaths from the chest all throughout the day.

In itself, this often leads to feelings of stress, tension, anxiety and detachment from the physical body (being lost in the head).

There are powerful techniques for using the breath (commonly called *Pranayama*) to promote many different benefits depending on our overall purpose or need.

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One powerful tactic (and one I suggest everyone use whether you decide to practice Pranayama or not) is to notice how you are breathing throughout the day and then slowly begin correcting it.

Notice yourself taking quick, shallow breaths or even holding your breath?

Intentionally slow and deepen your breathing. Try doing this all throughout the day whenever you remember/notice it.

By becoming more aware of our breathing we will likely begin to notice how often we breathe in restrictive ways.

By changing this pattern we open ourselves more and more. We promote greater calm and relaxation and ground ourselves in our bodies and in the moment.

Resources:

One of the best courses we've come across for breathing techniques and pranayama comes from Michael Bijker at LAP, he offers an extensive course featuring 15 hours of instruction for \$9.99, you can check it out here: yogalap.com/pranayama

20. WORRY REDUCTION

Worry is often one of the biggest problems we struggle with when we have anxiety. Worry can feel automatic and out of our control.

But we can learn to manage our worry and greatly reduce the amount of time we spend worrying on a daily basis, if not eliminate it entirely.

Many of us cling to our worrying, believing it gives us a sense of control over possible threats or failures. But worry doesn't solve our problems or prevent negative things from happening.

We can, however, make plans for our lives and take appropriate action for the best outcomes.

There are effective techniques available to us for managing and overcoming worry. Whether it's chronic daily worry, worry about a future event or situation (anticipatory worry) or worry in the present moment.

Worry doesn't have to consume our lives or feel out of our control. One of the very first steps we can take to overcoming anxiety is to get our worry under control.

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This means we begin to take back control over our minds and stop letting worry take over.

We can use different strategies and techniques to manage our worry and learn to see potential problems as a means to problem-solve, make plans and set goals.

We can also root out the irrational, unrealistic and pointless, worries many of us have become used to as they serve no purpose for us.

Resources:

If worry is an issue for you and you want to learn how to overcome worry check out our article:

[Proven Techniques for Overcoming Worry: How to Stop the Noise](#) :

21. QIGONG

One of my personal favorite forms of meditation and energy therapy is Qigong.

Qigong is an effective practice for reducing anxiety, balancing energy in the body and mind and promoting a state of inner calm and confidence.

Unlike most other forms of meditation, Qigong is generally done using movement - often done standing but can be done sitting or lying as well.

Qigong places a strong emphasis on the breath and breathing where the breath is used to "move" the energy in the body.

Most practices combine breathing techniques with some form of movement.

Qigong promotes the activation and manipulation of the energy systems to release blockages in the body and mind. This leads to a more balanced, energetic, mental and emotional state.

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I personally practice Qigong several times per week, alternating between a standard meditation/mindfulness practice and Qigong.

I find the practice of Qigong to be highly effective for reducing stress and anxiety and find it to be one of the best practices for becoming more grounded in the body and less stuck in the head. Something I struggled with for a long time.

If you're looking for an effective alternative to traditional sitting meditation, something to add to your current practice or simply prefer to get up move and get out of your head I highly recommend trying Qigong.

We have an in-depth guide to Qigong in the works.

Resources:

Popular Qigong teacher Lee Holden offers an excellent program on Qigong perfect for beginners and experienced practitioners alike. You can check out his course here:

[Qi Gong for Health and Healing](#)

22. EFT (TAPPING)

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), often referred to as "*Tapping*," is a therapeutic technique that uses theories and processes based on acupuncture and energy psychology.

EFT, and tapping in particular, is something I initially wrote off as another gimmick in the self-help space, but I quickly became a strong proponent of the techniques once I began to learn the process and practice it myself.

Tapping is done by tapping with your fingertips on specific meridian points of the body while talking through a traumatic experience, uncomfortable emotions or any other issue or place you feel stuck in life.

The goal of EFT and tapping is to restore balance to the mind/body by correcting the disruption in the body's energy system caused by a distressing memory or emotion.

To be clear EFT believes the energy disruption is the cause of negative emotions, not the memory itself.

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EFT aims to remove the “charge” from the distressing memory so that it no longer causes pain or disruption in our lives.

The experiences of those who have received benefit from using EFT and Tapping techniques can not be denied, whether others want to chalk it up as a placebo effect or not.

I've personally seen people experience dramatic emotional and mental shifts after a few short sessions. Years of trauma, pain, guilt, fear, shame, anxiety - released.

I believe EFT/Tapping to be one of the single most effective strategies for overcoming anxiety, trauma and emotional issues.

Resources:

I have received professional training in EFT/Tapping and have been using it myself for many years. I've written an in-depth guide to get you started with EFT for anxiety, OCD, Trauma and/or pain.

You can find that article here: [Tapping Anxiety Away: How to Use Emotional Freedom Techniques \(EFT\) for Anxiety, OCD & Trauma](#)

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The founder of EFT, Gary Craig, lays out his entire EFT/Tapping system with an in-depth tutorial, free of charge on his website:

<https://www.emofree.com/english/eft-tapping-tutorial-en.html>

For a more structured online course delivered in video format, check out Dawson Church's "The Tapping Course"

23. MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Mindfulness is awareness of the present moment and acceptance of everything that is arising; feelings, thoughts, sensations, etc.

With anxiety, we are very often future focused, living much of lives consumed with worry about future events and avoiding possible danger and potential "catastrophes"

But we also get stuck in the past; analyzing our mistakes and failures and fearful experiences, filling ourselves with guilt, shame and avoidance.

Whether we are focused on the past or the future, we always seem to miss the present moment and what is actually happening right now.

Cultivating mindfulness is a profoundly effective practice for bringing our minds out of the constant haze of fears, worries and failures and back to the living breathing present moment.

Mindfulness practice comes from traditional meditation practices with an emphasis on awareness of our breath and present experience (feelings, sensations, etc.)

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But you don't necessarily have to sit and meditate to develop mindfulness (*although it is the most effective way*), you can also develop mindfulness by consistently bringing your awareness back to the present moment throughout the day, even while performing the most mundane tasks; chewing your food, walking down the street, taking a shower, etc.

Resources:

We have a deep in-depth article available on meditation that discusses both meditation and mindfulness, different techniques and a short breathing meditation you can practice right now:

[The Guide to Meditation: How to Meditate for Anxiety & Gain Inner Peace](#)

If you're truly interested in learning a mindfulness practice for stress, anxiety and overall well-being we recommend checking out *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* (*MBSR*), the most scientifically studied, tested and proven mindfulness-based program available anywhere. This is a program that we personally use and recommend.

[MBSR Online Course](#)

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If you are interested in free mindfulness exercises, check out the website of Dr. Ronald Siegel, where he provides 15 mindfulness exercises you can stream or download absolutely free

<http://www.mindfulness-solution.com/DownloadMeditations>

The Power of Awareness is **one of the best courses available for Mindfulness**, taught by two of the best teachers in the world Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach. If your serious about learning and practicing mindfulness this extensive course will guide you along the path. You can check it out here:

[The Power of Awareness](#)

24. YOGA

Yoga is a group of practices that originated in India primarily associated with various movements and postures. But Yoga has at its core a deeply meditative and spiritual/metaphysical dimension.

While popularized forms of Yoga as seen on TV and in local gyms tend to focus on the physical - traditional Yoga implements aspects of both the spiritual and the physical.

Yoga at its root is a combination of physical postures with breathing and meditation.

The primary goal of Yoga depends on the particular form of Yoga but most have at their core mental and physical purification along with a spiritual connection to the transcendent.

You don't need to be a spiritual person to practice Yoga, as many of the modern classes in Yoga have proven.

The practice of the postures and movements has numerous health benefits and the breathing and meditative components provide greater clarity, groundedness and calm the mind.

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Yoga can be an effective practice for physical health, vitality and strength, and for mental and emotional health by reducing stress and anxiety, promoting relaxation and balance, clearing the mind and detaching from one's thoughts.

Popular forms of Yoga include:

- Hatha Yoga
- Kundalini Yoga
- Yoga Nidra (Sleep Yoga)
- Bikram Yoga (the current forms of Hot Yoga stem from Bikram Yoga)
- Ashtanga Yoga
- Vinyasa Yoga (Flow Yoga)
- Yin Yoga

All forms of Yoga can greatly reduce stress, anxiety, physical and mental tension and balance the nervous system.

I wish I could say one form of Yoga was the best for anxiety but Yoga practices tend to vary widely depending on the teacher and the particular instruction, even within the same forms of Yoga.

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If you're interested in Yoga or attending a Yoga class, I recommend finding a reputable teacher that fits with you and offers not only the physical practices but the breathing and meditative practices as well.

Many Yoga teachers will use techniques and practices from different forms of Yoga to develop a more integrative practice.

You can typically find Yoga classes in your community, at your local gym or YMCA or by doing a Google search for Yoga classes in your area.

Resources:

If you prefer to practice Yoga in the comfort of your own home, there are many different online options available.

One of the most popular streaming sites is GAIA, where you can stream over 8,000 yoga videos for \$11.99 a month: <https://www.gaia.com/yoga>

If you prefer an in-depth course taught by a world-class expert, that teaches you everything you need to know to practice Yoga at home, I recommend this course by Tara Stiles: [The Complete Guide to Yoga](#)

25. GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

When we suffer from anxiety we are often stuck in our heads; whether it's imagining future anxiety-producing situations, obsessing over a particular worry or fighting with our thoughts to get them under control; we often spend more time lost in thoughts and images than we spend with the concrete present moment.

Grounding techniques are the perfect antidote to this highly mental (and unbalanced) state of being.

Grounding techniques bring us down out of our heads and our thoughts of the past or future and into our bodies and the present moment.

Any technique that helps to center us ; bringing us into greater contact with our bodies and our present (concrete) experience, could be considered a grounding technique.

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The following are a few examples of techniques that can be effective for helping to ground and center us

- Qigong
- Mindfulness practices such as mindful eating or mindful walking
- Taking a cold shower
- Connecting with nature (literally touching the ground)
- Exercise
- Using your senses (what you can see, smell, hear, etc.?)
- Awareness of the breath

A popular grounding technique used by many therapists is the "*5-4-3-2-1 Game*." This technique is extremely simple but effective for bringing us back to the present moment and concrete reality.

It goes like this:

1. Name 5 things you can **see**
2. Name 4 things you can **hear**
3. Name 3 things you can **touch**
4. Name 2 things you can **smell**
5. Name 1 thing you can **taste**

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The 54321 technique and other grounding techniques can be effective strategies for anxiety and excessive mental states.

Grounding techniques are also recommended (and effective) for dissociative states caused by trauma.

Dissociation is when we mentally leave (or escape) our current situation.

This is usually due to some type of physical trauma where we leave our body (mentally/imaginatively) to avoid feeling pain.

We can also dissociate to avoid feeling strong (unacceptable) feelings or emotions. These can include feelings such as rage, anger or sexual desire.

Grounding techniques help to bring us back into our body and back into our present experience. They can be a valuable strategy for bridging the gap we have created between our mind and our body.

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Resources:

One of the absolute best approaches to grounding I've come across, is "*The Realization Process*," created by Judith Blackstone, PhD.

While described as "a step-by-step course in embodied spiritual awakening," it is one of the most deeply human and natural processes for getting into the body and becoming more alive with presence I've ever come across.

I genuinely and whole heartedly recommend this program for coming home into the body. In fact I would say it's likely one of my top 3 favorite approaches for anxiety, trauma and psychological/spiritual awakening.

You can check it out here:

The Realization Process

We also plan to release an article on grounding techniques for anxiety in the near future.

Part 5

Area of Approach: Anxiety Tools

26. HEARTMATH

Heartmath is a device and technique based on over 26 years of research and over 300 independent studies and experiments to help those that use it create a state of balance and harmony in the mind, body and emotions.

Studies done on nearly 12,000 users of Heartmath reported the following benefits:

- 46% reduction in anxiety
- 48% reduction in fatigue
- 56% reduction in depression symptoms
- 38% improvement in calmness
- 30% improvement in sleep
- 24% improvement in focus

Similar in function to a Biofeedback device, Heartmath helps the user better control an otherwise involuntary aspect of the body/mind.

In this case, *heart rate variability (the beat-to-beat variation in the heart rate)* and better control the emotional processes.

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Variability in the heart rate is caused by the actions of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

During times of stress and anxiety or negative emotional states, these systems alter the heart rate variability (HRV) from a more stable pattern to one that is more erratic.

With a more unstable HRV, the heart (and nervous system) actually reinforces the negative emotional experience.

HRV is closely tied to both cognitive function and emotional stability.

A more stable pattern helps reinforce positive feelings and cognition processes - affecting how we think and feel.

Through the use of HeartMath devices and training, we learn to control our HRV and take control of our emotional states.

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Resources:

HeartMath has two main products available:

- ***Inner Balance*** - which connects to a smartphone (either through Bluetooth or wired)
- ***emWave2*** - which is a standalone handheld device that can be connected to a computer

Both are excellent for anxiety. You can learn more about them on HeartMath's website

<https://store.heartmath.com/tech/>

We highly recommend HeartMath as an effective way to balance the nervous system and actively create positive emotional states. Reducing anxiety and stress in the process.

We will have an article up soon discussing HeartMath in more detail.

27. MUSIC

Music can be a powerful tool for promoting peace and calm in our lives. Music can inspire, music can motivate and music can even heal.

I'm not necessarily referring to music "therapy," I simply mean listening to or playing music of some kind.

Playing music and listening to music can have a significant impact on stress levels as well as our emotional state.

There is an almost unlimited supply of music available online made for relieving stress and anxiety. Sites like Spotify and Youtube offer many different songs and playlists.

In my opinion, you don't need to need to listen to music strictly made for stress or anxiety.

Music is a subjective experience, therefore listen to whatever calms you, soothes you, grounds you, makes you feel alive or whatever helps reduce your anxiety, even if it's only temporary.

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The type of music or the instrument that you play doesn't matter.

The type of music you listen to doesn't matter.

What matters is what the music does for you personally.

If you find soft piano music comforting by all means enjoy.

Does heavy metal ground you and make you feel happy? Then listen to that and enjoy it.

Play the bass, play the piano, play the ukulele, whatever you enjoy.

We will have an article on music and anxiety in the near future.

28. CRANIAL ELECTROTHERAPY STIMULATION (CES)

Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation, abbreviated CES, is an FDA approved treatment method for anxiety, depression, insomnia and certain forms of chronic pain.

CES treatment uses a small device that attaches to the earlobes (*or temples depending on the device*) that transmits low-intensity current to the scalp and brain.

The exact process as to how CES achieves its effects of reducing anxiety and depression and relieving pain is not fully understood.

It is believed CES helps balance neurotransmitters in the brain and promotes endorphin release.

A 6-week clinical study on those using the Alpha-Stim device (a popular FDA approved CES device) reported an average reduction in anxiety of 40.4%.

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Resources:

There are 3 CES devices we recommend:

Alpha-Stim: <https://www.alpha-stim.com/>

An FDA approved device that is the most highly regarded and researched CES device available; if you're in the US it does require a doctor's referral (it may be covered by your health insurance), outside of the US it can be sold without a doctor's referral

Oasis Pro and CES Ultra: caputron.com (*we have partnered with Caputron to give our reader's 5% off their order, simply use coupon code **PAS***)

Both the Oasis Pro and CES Ultra are non-FDA approved and do not require a doctor's referral to purchase; they are both effective alternatives to the Alpha-Stim and much less expensive; I personally own the Oasis Pro

If you'd like to learn more about Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation and CES devices check out our article:

[Electrotherapy: How CES Can Help With Anxiety](#)

29. APPS

Nearly all of us carry some type of smartphone on us for the majority of the day. The apps available on our phones can help us to do everything from online banking to hiring an Uber.

But did you know that there are apps that can help us manage our anxiety?

Not all apps are created equal but there are a few available that can be effective. Whether it's helping us to establish a meditation or mindfulness practice, access a therapist or coach, learn specific strategies or simply for stress management.

Resources:

On our website we an extensive article listing our favorite meditation, relaxation and self-help apps for anxiety, where we go into detail about what each app offers to the user. You can check it out here:

[The Best Apps for Anxiety: Our Favorite Meditation, Relaxation and Self-Help Apps](#)

Overcoming Anxiety: A Guide to 42 Proven Strategies

For a few of our favorites, you can check out the 3 below, each of which offers a different approach.

InsightTimer (available for both Android and Apple):

easily our favorite app for meditation and mindfulness practice, it's 100% free with over 30,000 guided meditation and music tracks (there is a paid option that offers access to premium courses and features but it's not necessary), we highly recommend InsightTimer

<https://insighttimer.com/>

Moodkit (currently only available for Apple devices):

a CBT based app designed to help you better understand and become more aware of your thoughts and moods while reducing stress, anxiety and depression, improving your mood in the process; Moodkit currently costs \$4.99

<https://www.thriveport.com/products/moodkit/>

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Breathe2Relax (available for Android and Apple):

we practice and recommend diaphragmatic breathing, a very effective breathing technique for calming the mind and body by activating the Parasympathetic Nervous System (the system of "rest-and-digest"), Breathe2Relax is a 100% free app that can help teach you diaphragmatic breathing, help you establish this technique into your daily life and general stress reduction techniques

Apple Store: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/breathe2relax/id425720246>

Google Play (Android): https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.t2health.breathe2relax&hl=en_US

30. BIOFEEDBACK & NEUROFEEDBACK

Biofeedback is a technique using a specific device or instrument to assist the user in gaining greater control over physiological processes in the brain and body.

These are processes the user may have never realized they could control (*typically considered involuntary processes*), such as slowing the heart rate or inducing physical relaxation.

Biofeedback can be used to help treat or improve anxiety, stress and chronic pain. It is also used to improve athletic performance and overall wellness.

Neurofeedback (*also called EEG biofeedback*) is a particular form of Biofeedback that focuses on improving brainwave activity and bringing the mind into balance.

Neurofeedback can be effective for anxiety and stress, ADHD, insomnia, promoting relaxation, epilepsy and even brain injuries.

Biofeedback (and Neurofeedback) involves the active participation of the user to regulate these mind/body processes based on the feedback they are receiving from the device, hence Bio- *feedback*.

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For example with Neurofeedback; EEG sensors monitor our brainwaves and a computer relays the data.

Many devices use games or music to help us train our brains to stay within an optimal brainwave range. This can be based on what is happening in the game or in the music.

Essentially we begin to gain control over our brainwave states on a moment by moment basis, rather than being a victim of our current mental/emotional states.

Most Biofeedback/Neurofeedback sessions are done under the supervision of a trained clinician. However, you can purchase a Biofeedback and/or Neurofeedback system for home use.

Resources:

High quality, professional style systems can be pretty expensive but if you're serious about trying them out you can check out the supplier we recommend below:

<https://bio-medical.com/pro-systems/biofeedback-systems.html>

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While we haven't written extensively on the topic of Biofeedback and Neurofeedback it can be an extremely effective option for overcoming anxiety and developing greater control over our mental and emotional states.

We plan to have future articles that discuss both Biofeedback and Neurofeedback in greater detail.

31. BRAINWAVE ENTRAINMENT

Brainwave entrainment is the process of synchronizing the brainwaves with an external stimulus.

The way that we use it for anxiety is with audio tracks using brainwave entrainment technology; specifically binaural beats and isochronic tones.

So what's the point of synchronizing our brainwaves?

Specific brainwave patterns; such as Beta, Alpha, Theta and Delta, promote specific mental and emotional states.

For example, creating more Alpha waves can increase creativity, imagination and relaxation.

Brainwave entrainment programs using binaural beats or isochronic tones can help us to relax, focus, create, sleep, reduce stress and anxiety and even take us to the deepest stages of meditation; all depending on our particular need and the program we use.

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Resources:

We have an article available that goes into more detail on the particulars of brainwave entrainment, how it works, the different brainwave frequencies, the benefits of brainwave entrainment technology, how to use it and the programs we personally use and recommend.

[Dramatically Reduce Anxiety With Brainwave Entrainment](#)

Or if you'd rather just dive right in and experience the technology for yourself, you can check out the program we recommend with a free demo

[iAwake Technologies](#)

[Or check out our own brainwave entrainment programs, the Profound Series programs, created specifically for anxiety:](#)

<https://profoundanxietysolutions.com/store/>

Part 6

Area of Approach: Life Skills & Life Changes

32. SELF-COMPASSION

How do you talk to yourself? How do you treat yourself when you make a mistake or fail at something? Have you ever stopped and observed your self talk?

If you're dealing with anxiety, I'm willing to guess your self-talk tends to be negative.

I'm also willing to guess that you talk to and treat yourself much worse than you would ever talk to or treat a friend or loved one.

When I truly began to pay attention to my self-talk and how I treated myself I was amazed at how poorly I spoke to myself, how negative I was and how often I beat myself up or put myself down.

Thoughts such as "*You idiot, why did you screw that up.*" "*Noone is ever going to truly love you.*" "*Why should I bother trying, I'm only going to fuck that up.*"

I would have hundreds of these thoughts every day.

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A lot of my anxiety came from disapproval of myself for any type of failure or mistake (perfectionism) - even having anxiety I saw as a failure.

I would constantly tell me myself, " *You shouldn't have anxiety, that means you're weak.*"

And this went on even if I did something good or overcame a problem. Thoughts would spring up afterwards such as: "You just got lucky" or "This probably won't last so watch out."

This constant disapproval and painful self-talk is unfortunately all too common among those of us with anxiety, those of us with feelings of low self worth and/or those of us with a history of past trauma.

The crazy part is, we are often among the most compassionate and understanding people towards friends and loved ones. It's only ourselves that we treat so harshly.

The solution to this problem is to develop self-compassion. Begin to treat ourselves as we would a close friend or loved one.

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When we have compassion for ourselves we change not only how we talk to and treat ourselves but we change the whole landscape of anxiety.

Instead of disapproving of our anxiety and trying to hide or fight it, we accept the anxiety and develop the ability to comfort and soothe ourselves during times of anxiety or fear.

This compassion, acceptance and self-soothing, eliminates much of the tension, resistance and shame from the anxiety.

Having self-compassion takes much of the "bite" out of anxiety. It allows us to make mistakes and view our past failures and pain from a new place.

We can change our self-talk from a constant barrage of put-downs and negativity, to thoughts of understanding, patience and acceptance.

Many of us have experienced hardships, pain and trauma in our lives that is at the core of our anxiety.

Instead of beating ourselves up for being anxious or afraid, we need to look at what we've been through with the eyes of compassion and begin to practice speaking to ourselves more kindly.

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Self-Compassion is more than just "fluffy" self-help advice.

Many of us (in fact I'd say **most** of us) are painfully critical of ourselves and we are often filled with emotions of shame, guilt, and internal condemnation about many aspects of our lives; such as the way we look, our unaccepted or "weak" emotions, past failures or childhood struggles.

This internal behavior of beating ourselves up and carrying around feelings of shame and guilt has an immediate impact on our mental health.

Fortunately, the idea of treating ourselves with compassion, with more understanding and patience, is beginning to take hold among the self-help community and the psychology/therapy community as a whole.

Self-Compassion is also a scientifically validated strategy/approach with empirically supported research behind it.

Respected researchers such as Dr. Kristin Neff and Dr. Chris Germer have helped to bring Self-Compassion to the forefront of psychological approaches to mental health, with programs such as Mindful Self-Compassion.

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Resources:

One of the very best teachers on the subject of Self-Compassion is Dr. Kristin Neff, pioneering researcher and co-developer of the Mindful Self-Compassion program.

She offers a few free Self-Compassion guided meditations on her website here: <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#>

She also offers a step-by-step course in self-compassion, featuring 6 hours of training, available here: [Self-Compassion Step by Step](#)

Self-Compassion is an extremely important topic and we will have an article on self-compassion and the role it plays in anxiety and our overall mental and emotional health in an upcoming article.

33. BALANCE YOUR LIFE (REDUCE STRESS)

In our fast-paced world, our lives can get out of balance quickly.

There are a lot of factors that can cause our lives to become unbalanced including:

- working excessive hours
- lack of physical and emotional connection with others
- spending less time at home with family
- the sheer amount of information we receive on a daily basis from our computers, phones and tablets
- lack of free/personal time or recreations
- lack of sleep or poor sleep habits

All of those factors, as well as many others not listed, can play a part in our stress and anxiety (and depression).

Balancing our lives between work, family/friends, free time (recreation) and sleep can be difficult at times.

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The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the average American works 44 hours per week, with many people working over 50 hours per week.

This doesn't include time spent commuting to and from work, the time we spend getting ready for work or additional work we may do at home.

What's worse, many people do not enjoy their line of work, essentially spending 40+ hours per week doing something they don't enjoy.

Add to this the fact many people spend 40+ hours per work working and still struggle to pay their bills or live paycheck to paycheck.

It becomes pretty easy to see how this can set us up for stress, anxiety and depression, frustration and discontent.

But it's not just our work that causes anxiety - if any major area of life is out of balance or deeply unsatisfying our physical, emotional and psychological health can suffer as a result.

The mother that devotes all of her time to her family and has no time for friends or recreation.....

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The man that spends all his time in recreation with little to no essential relationships or occupation.....

The business manager, successful in business but works 50+ hours per week, gets 5 hours of sleep per night and spends little time with their family....

These are examples of imbalances in life and they will eventually take their toll on our health.

In order to reduce stress and anxiety (and depression), we need to examine the key areas in our lives and take an honest look at how much time we spend on each, and which areas we have neglected.

- Relationships: friends, family, intimate relationships
- Work: our job, occupation or business, (*do you enjoy it?*)
- Free Time (recreation): hobbies, relaxation, vacation, travel,
- Sleep: how much sleep are you getting on average?

Is your life balanced?

34. SURRENDER

One of the fundamental underlying causes of almost all forms of anxiety is a deep need/desire for control.

This can take on many forms and can display itself in our lives in many ways.

Wanting to know all of the risks involved before we do something or worrying over every possible thing that can go wrong with a situation is a form of trying to control our experience (in this case to prevent or avoid something).

With social anxiety and phobias, we often want to know "who will be there," or we avoid certain people or situations or we desperately try to determine "*what do they really think of me.*" This is another form of control (in this case other's opinions of us).

OCD is control *par excellence*. We seek to control a chaotic world, either our internal world or the external, by obsessively controlling our actions.

The problem with nearly every form of control as it relates to anxiety or any other issue is that, 1. it rarely ever works, and 2. most of the time it merely provides the illusion of control.

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The truth is, there isn't very much in life that we truly have control over. Deep down we all realize this, but it is a scary concept and the source of most anxiety and fear.

We can't control others, we can't control mother nature or the weather or natural disasters, we have limited control over our own thoughts and even our bodies can betray us.

Essentially we can either continue to struggle and fight for a false sense of control over life, creating anxiety and fear in the process or we can surrender more and more to life as it is, as it occurs and become more in tune with our own experience.

Surrender isn't just a fancy concept or nice "idea" but one of the most powerful approaches to overcoming anxiety and fear as well as a profound way to live our lives.

True surrender can free us from the unnecessary struggles in our lives and liberate our minds and personal energy that is often tied up with our desperate need to control.

By practicing surrender we live life more authentically, within the flow of life itself, instead of frantically going against the flow or trying to force life to follow our rules or fit into our terms.

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We can surrender to God, or the universe or to the energy, power and flow of life itself.

Regardless of your personal beliefs, deep down, surrender is releasing our fixed, resistant and limited perspectives and allowing life to show us the way, even if we don't understand the "why" behind it or it doesn't fit our particular "rules" of life.

And, just as importantly, trusting in the process...

Resources:

One of the most well known teachers on the concept of surrender is Michael A Singer, who's book *"The Untethered Soul"* has sold millions of copies around the world. While the book is a good starting point for understanding the power of surrender it lacks much in the way of applying the concept.

Michael offers an in-depth course not only on how to practice surrender in our lives but remove struggle, calm the mind and clear negative emotions. If your interested you can check it out [here](#):

Living From a Place of Surrender

35. FORGIVENESS

The pain of the past from those who have wronged us, hurt us, abandoned us or betrayed us, can have a significant impact on our lives.

How long ago the particular pain or trauma occurred often makes little difference if we continue holding onto the pain.

The strength and intensity of the past trauma in our present daily lives and experiences are what matter - not when it occurred.

Past pain and trauma can often lead to anxiety, fear, phobias and depression and lead to negative outcomes in our lives; such as not being to start or maintain relationships or avoiding certain situations.

It may sound like a radical concept but forgiving those who have caused you pain in any way - no matter how terrible - can release you from the pain of blame, guilt, anger, hatred, etc.

By forgiving that person, you are turning the page so to speak and releasing that person from your mind.

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I've seen the release that comes from those who forgive those that have caused them pain; a mother forgiving the drunk driver that killed her son, a woman forgiving the man that raped her, a man forgiving his father for the abuse he suffered as a child.

You may be thinking "*Those people are crazy for forgiving them!*" "*What they did was terrible, they shouldn't be forgiven.*"

While this is a normal response, think about it in this way.

Would it be better to carry that person (*the one that caused you pain*) around in your mind for the rest of your life or forgive them so you can be free?

Forgiveness is about the person in pain, not the perpetrator.

Forgiving someone isn't the same as accepting what they did as ok.

A father should never abuse his son under any circumstances whatsoever and should face the full force of the law for his actions.

But it's the son who has to carry around the blame, anger and rage for what his father did. By forgiving him he can lay down the powerful emotions and let it go.

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Forgiveness can also apply to ourselves.

If you were the one who caused the pain or did something you consider unacceptable or unforgivable you put yourself in the same boat as what we have discussed above - except this time you are pointing the finger at yourself with anger and blame.

So forgiving ourselves - no matter how terrible the pain we caused - can release us from guilt, anger and shame and the resulting anxiety, fear and depression.

True forgiveness can reopen our hearts and allow love back into our lives...

Resources:

Highly respected psychologist and meditation teacher, Tara Brach, offers a free 3 part talk on forgiveness (about an hour each) on her website which you can find here:

<https://www.tarabrach.com/forgiveness-releasing-blame-pt1/>

An excellent book on the topic of forgiveness is Desmond Tutu's "The Book of Forgiving" which you can find on Amazon:

[The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World](#)

36. SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Self-Acceptance is another powerful concept that can profoundly change our perspective towards ourselves as well as our relationship to anxiety and other issues.

Self-Acceptance is closely related to two other powerful concepts we mentioned above, Self-Compassion and Surrender.

When we accept fully we are surrendering to what is. The act of accepting our pain without judgement or self-criticism, is an act of self-compassion.

If I accept what I am feeling right now - doesn't make a difference if it's anxiety, fear, joy, excitement, etc. - if I accept it completely I am surrendering to my present moment experience.

Not fighting it, not trying to change it or alter it, not trying to avoid it.

People often hear the concept of acceptance and assume it means being passive. I often hear people say "*If I simply accept my anxiety it will never go away.*"

While this may seem like a rational response, it is flawed for 2 reasons.

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1. Anxiety always passes, by fighting our anxious feelings/thoughts we are actually prolonging the anxiety and making it worse and more intense . We are actually splitting ourselves in two; one part of ourselves feels anxious, and the other part is resisting or fighting the anxiety.
2. Accepting our anxiety doesn't mean resigning to our anxiety and thinking "*This is just the way it is, I'm an anxious person and I'll always be this way* ." Accepting our anxiety simply means accepting our present moment experience . We can always take action, we can always make necessary changes, but we can only do it from where we are right NOW.

Acceptance is also important for moving on in our lives and healing past hurts and failures. By continuing to deny our emotions and our pain we continue to unconsciously hold onto the very things we want to get rid of.

Not accepting our emotions or labeling parts of ourselves as "bad" or "unacceptable" will lead to significant issues in life, including anxiety.

For many of us, strong feelings/emotions such as anger or sexual desire are often ignored, suppressed or avoided at all costs. While we may have hidden these feelings so well that we believe we don't have them, emotions are always seeking expression.

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In many cases, deeply repressed or resisted emotions will find expression in other ways, especially as they near our conscious awareness.

We may feel anxiety or internal tension instead of anger or fatigue instead of grief.

One of the major underlying issues that causes self-criticism and our inability to accept ourselves as we are, is a **deep feeling of shame**.

Shame that we are deeply flawed in some way and therefore not acceptable as we are.

Based on my own work and the work of others, I believe this deep feeling of shame; feeling not good enough, not lovable enough, not valuable enough, to be at the core of our desire to change who we are, to avoid and run from our problems, to put up a front to others.

By learning to accept ourselves and heal this deep inner shame we can live life more authentically, truly aligned with who we are.

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Resources:

Self-Acceptance is a deeply important topic and there are many different approaches available for improving our ability to accept ourselves (flaws and all) and free ourselves at the same time.

For a better understanding of how ignoring or repressing our emotions can lead to anxiety and other issues you can check out our article on the [Psychological Causes of Anxiety](#)

A good book on acceptance and healing the feelings of "unworthiness" is: [Radical Acceptance](#) by Tara Brach

An excellent book on effectively expressing and integrating emotions, including engaging so called "negative emotions" (anger, grief, shame, fear), check out : [Emotional Intimacy](#) by Robert Augustus Masters

If want a deep dive into Self-Acceptance, overcoming self-judgment, and living more authentically, check out the Self-Acceptance Summit, with over 35 hours of content, with lessons by 30 noted teachers on the topic: [Self Acceptance Summit](#)

37. POSITIVE LIFE CHANGES

Our lifestyle and life choices are a major contributing factor to our levels of stress, anxiety and unhappiness and... - vice versa - our underlying anxiety can influence our lifestyle and life choices.

The choices we have made in life and our past and present lifestyle can often contribute to (if not directly result in) our underlying anxiety in whatever forms it takes; panic, social anxiety, obsessive thoughts, health anxiety, etc.

On the other hand, if you've dealt with anxiety for a long period of time (*or most of your life, as I had*) we can make bad choices in order to avoid feeling anxious.

For example: avoiding situations or avoiding actions we need to take, purposefully limiting our potential, purposefully destroying our relationships to avoid getting hurt, using excessive amounts of alcohol or drugs to get rid of anxiety, etc.

Whatever came first, the anxiety, or the lifestyle that causes us anxiety, we can all make positive changes in our lives to improve our situations and our current mental, emotional and physical health.

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For example, reading and implementing the strategies in this book and on our website is one way to make positive changes in your life.

To uncover where changes need to be made we need to be honest with ourselves.

Many of the things that are causing anxiety, fear and unhappiness in our lives will be right in front of eyes, such as a job we hate or an unloving or abusive partner.

These things may not always be easy to change or get away from so it's important to reach out to others whenever possible; trusted friends, supportive communities, related training, professionals that can help, etc.

Other things that need to change in our lives may be less obvious or drastic but never the less are there; feeding our anxiety, fear and avoidance behaviors.

It's important to uncover the things that are contributing to our anxiety and make the positive changes necessary to improve our lives.

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Resources:

We can create many positive life changes by taking action to develop new habits such as eating healthy or treating ourselves with more kindness and compassion. We can also improve many different aspects of our lives.

Sometimes change can be hard, especially if we are dealing with thought patterns and behaviors that have been ingrained over a lifetime.

There are many ways to get help making the changes we want to make. Whether it is a friend, coach, therapist or anyone else that may be able to help us.

There are also online courses available to help us learn how to make intentional changes in our lives, break old habits and help promote permanent changes.

One of the best programs I've come across is from Kelly McGonigal, who has created a 6-hour online video course on choosing change, based on her work at Stanford University. You can check it out here:

[Choose to Change](#)

38. CREATIVITY AND ART

Creative people tend to suffer more from anxiety (and depression) than the average person.

Just think about how often you are **imagining** terrible scenarios or twisting a single phrase someone said to you into a world-ending catastrophic disaster.

Anxiety takes an active imagination. This is creativity - used for a negative purpose and in a self-sabotaging way.

Instead of imagining terrible things happening to you, what if you channel that anxiety and your wild imagination and use it to write a book?

If all you can imagine are terrible things, write a thriller or a horror novel!

Instead of silently suffering from an upheaval of emotions or the pain of past trauma, what if you channel that pain and storm of emotions into a painting or a song?

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Art therapy and the use of creativity can be extremely effective for dealing with anxiety, fear, depression and trauma by allowing contents of the subconscious or unconscious mind (stuff that we normally fight and suppress) the freedom to be expressed and released.

The contents of our subconscious/unconscious mind often don't seek expression in rational, ordered ways. Art therapy is one of the few strategies that can allow the most irrational, strange or illogical to be expressed.

This expression can often lead to a profound releasing of years of trauma and fear. Relieving our mind of the burden (anxiety and tension) of keeping this pain buried.

Resources:

You don't really need a course, online program or therapist to use art therapy. Some paint and a canvas or a pencil and paper is enough to begin.

If you are working with deeply traumatic memories or emotions, the help of a licensed therapist working with art therapy may be of immense help.

Many therapists today now use some form of art therapy in their practice so finding one near you shouldn't be difficult.

Part 7

Area of Approach: Additional Anxiety Support

39. ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture is a long-held practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in which thin needles are placed in the skin along the body's energy (or meridian) channels. The needles are placed according to the health issue being addressed.

Benefits/Uses Include:

- anxiety
- stress
- chronic pain
- headaches
- migraines
- gut/digestion issues
- addiction
- asthma
- depression
- insomnia

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Here in the West, Acupuncture was often dismissed as pseudoscience but in recent years the medical community has begun to accept acupuncture as a potentially effective option for health issues, especially chronic pain.

More and more acupuncture clinics are now available in most states, even in more rural communities.

A decade ago you would typically have to go to a major city to find an acupuncturist.

Doctors are referring patients for many health issues as an alternative to prescription medications.

My own primary care physician referred me to an acupuncturist when I was diagnosed with spinal arthritis to help deal with the pain and inflammation.

Acupuncture also releases endorphins, typically making you feel calm and content after the session is over. Although some sessions can leave you feeling energized depending on where they place the needles.

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Certain insurance plans may cover acupuncture if a referral is given from your doctor for a health-related issue, including anxiety. Check with your insurance company if you're interested in acupuncture.

It is important to consider the training and certification of an acupuncturist you plan to visit. Different states require different certifications and training to become a licensed or certified practitioner of acupuncture. Some acupuncturists are also doctors, you can find a list of those from the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture website:

<https://www.medicalacupuncture.org/>

I personally love acupuncture and the way I feel after a session. I personally recommend it for chronic pain, headaches or migraines or as additional support for anxiety or excessive stress.

40. AROMATHERAPY

Never underestimate the power of smell and the ability of particular scents to relax and calm the body and mind.

Although Aromatherapy is unlikely to help you overcome anxiety entirely, it can be useful as additional support for calming the nerves, overall relaxation and especially for sleep.

Popular scents for anxiety, relaxation and sleep include:

- Lavender
- Chamomile
- Valerian
- Jatamansi
- Jasmine
- Holy Basil
- Bergamot
- Geranium
- Frankincense

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Popular methods for producing these scents used to be things like candles or having the actual herb or plant in the home; today the most popular method (and arguably the easiest) is the use of a diffuser with essential oils.

You can find both the diffusers and the oils in numerous places online such as Amazon. Box stores such as Walmart and Target carry them as well.

Aromatherapy experts tend to recommend finding pure high-quality essential oils.

While I am far from an expert on Aromatherapy or essential oils I do enjoy different scents, especially Lavender. I find certain scents truly do promote relaxation and improve sleep.

I began using a diffuser with Lavender oil in my daughter's bedroom when she was younger and struggled with sleep.

It was actually very effective in helping her fall asleep and as the smell crept into the rest of the house I would notice a much more relaxed state of mind. She still uses it to this day whenever she needs it.

41. MASSAGE

Who doesn't love a good massage? Regardless of the type of message and regardless of the body part being massaged: back, feet, hands, head; massage just feels good.

In the right hands, massage can relieve physical (muscular) tension held in the body from years of stress, anxiety and mental tension.

Leaving us calm, relaxed and feeling good afterward.

Regular massage therapy has many benefits:

- reduce and prevent chronic pain
- relieve tension
- help correct postural/structural issues
- help us to become more grounded
- promote deep relaxation
- relieve mental tension
- reduce anxiety and stress

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Massage is one of the best strategies available for grounding ourselves in the body and getting out of the head (a common issue for those of us with anxiety) and the tangle of our thoughts.

Massage is one of the few strategies that involve physical contact with another person.

The touch, pressing, tapping, rubbing, of the massage therapist is behind much of the grounding benefits we receive from massage and part of it's healing.

Massage can be an effective support strategy for anxiety and stress and extremely effective for becoming more grounded, releasing deep physical tension often caused by anxiety.

But massage can be expensive, which is the biggest downside.

Unlike other strategies that can be covered under health insurance such as certain types of therapy, medications or acupuncture; most insurances do not cover massage.

If you can afford it, I recommend it.

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Another option is to ask a spouse or loved one to give you a massage. There are free tutorials and classes available online to learn massage techniques but it doesn't need to be a perfect professional massage to have benefit.

(For some, such as those who have unresolved sexual or physical trauma, massage may stir up uncomfortable feelings. If this the case, it may be best to avoid massage until much of the underlying trauma is resolved through therapy or other means, or have someone deeply trusted give the massage instead of a stranger)

42. HOBBIES

Stress and anxiety can often build up from our constant focus on problems and constant striving in life; tasks to complete, jobs that need to be done, that next class, that next promotion, that next goal.

Having hobbies we enjoy can provide a much-needed break from the pressures of life and bring us to a more simple, content focus on what we are doing right now.

An engaging hobby allows us to simply enjoy being present without the unnecessary pressure we put on ourselves. This includes the pressure to "get better."

Sometimes we need a break before we run back into the rushed, nose to the grindstone, overwhelming, seriousness of life.

Growing up in an unstable home filled with drama and abuse, video games, movies and books provided an invaluable distraction and escape from my chaotic childhood.

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Although certain hobbies like video games are often demonized, they allow for a necessary outlet that may not be available in everyday life.

And with the rise of the internet, people can connect with others like themselves from around the world, so it's not always an isolated experience.

These games can provide a brief (and fun) distraction during periods of overwhelming stress or emotions.

Other popular hobbies such as gardening and painting are well known stress relievers.

Gardening, for example, can help to bring our attention to our present experience and ground us. It can be a fulfilling experience for the senses; the smell of the flowers, the feel of the earth on our hands and beneath our feet, the sounds of the birds.

Painting, drawing and other creative hobbies can allow us to use our imagination in positive ways. Creating beauty, or expressing our deep pain.

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Board games and puzzles are also highly enjoyable hobbies and generally promote a relaxed state of sharing and participation with others.

Hobbies that can help calm an overactive, worry filled mind:

- Baking
- Gardening
- Painting
- Drawing
- Sewing/Knitting
- Writing
- Repairing/Fixing Things (house, car, garage, etc.)
- Reading
- Puzzles
- Hobbies we can share with others (such as Board Games)

To be clear, hobbies and distractions in any form are only meant to be used as a temporary means to reduce stress or simply for their own enjoyment - not as a way to avoid reality altogether.

There can be problems for those who use distractions as a way to avoid facing life's challenges or dealing with uncomfortable emotions. This isn't the way that we are recommending this strategy.

Overcoming Anxiety: A Guide to 42 Proven Strategies

Obviously we need to face our challenges and fears in order to overcome them, but sometimes we need to simply relax and engage with life in a light-hearted and enjoyable way.

Running from our problems won't work but neither will constantly being absorbed in them.

While hobbies won't cure us of fear and anxiety, it can provide relief from constant pressure and stress, reminding us to take a break from the seriousness of it all from time to time, relax, have fun and share our time with others.

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