

# BUILDING RESILIENCE: 9 WAYS TO TAME ANXIETY

## Symptoms of Anxiety

Anxiety impacts you both physically and mentally, influencing your thoughts and behaviors. When confronted with physical threats, anxiety serves to sharpen your focus on the danger, allowing you to identify its source and react appropriately, whether that means fighting back or fleeing.

This response generates the energy needed for quick action in the face of danger. Although this instinct can be beneficial, it may also lead to uncomfortable physical symptoms, such as a racing heart, difficulty concentrating, trembling, excessive sweating, or trouble swallowing. While these sensations may be distressing, they are generally not harmful in the short term.

Anxiety can also evoke feelings of impending doom or helplessness, which may trigger further anxiety and create a negative feedback loop of thoughts, behaviors, and physical reactions. Common experiences include feeling tense, irritable, or impatient. Individuals might find themselves pacing, zoning out, or feeling stuck, as if they are not making any progress.

## **Building resiliency, reducing anxiety**

### **1 Gather information.**

Knowledge of the threat, concerns, fears or issues can reduce anxiety. Gather accurate, factual information from trusted sources to better understand the source of your anxiety and help with problem-solving to gain a greater sense of control.

### **2 Practice self-care habits.**

Take a few moments to care for yourself each day, such as soaking in a soothing bath, listening to calming or upbeat music, getting plenty of sleep, and eating regular, balanced, nutritious meals and snacks. These habits can help whether you work from home or outside the home.

### **3 Meditate.**

Practice meditation, mindfulness, and breathing exercises to reduce stress. Incorporate these techniques into your daily routine for long-term benefits.

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## 4 Establish a new routine.

Routine and structure can be helpful and calming. Mindfully create a daily and weekly flow like starting your morning with a relaxing cup tea.

A routine of practical and enjoyable tasks may include:

1. Making a list of projects you want to accomplish.
2. Reading inspirational writings.
3. Writing in a journal to express your thoughts, hopes, emotions and concerns.
4. Scheduling time for physical activities or hobbies.

## 5 Stay connected.

Stay connected with loved ones through various means like phone calls, video calls, or in-person gatherings. Human connection reduces stress, builds camaraderie, and volunteering can provide purpose and reduce anxiety.

## 6 Look for the good.

Acknowledge the coexistence of good and bad, intentionally focus on finding the good, think hopeful and realistic thoughts to combat negativity, and seek beauty in life's challenges.

## 7 Exercise.

Regular exercise helps release stress by releasing endorphins. Activities like jumping jacks, push-ups, and yoga can help calm the mind and body.

## 8 Reflect.

Take time to reflect on what is truly important. Explore your worldview, spirituality and belief system. Find meaning in your life. Identify what you're grateful for and express gratitude.

## 9 Reach out.

Reach out for support to friends, healthcare professionals, or support groups to alleviate feelings of loneliness, share struggles, and reduce anxiety.

Linda Hubbard, L. M. F. T. (2024, February 8). 9 ways you can tame anxiety. Mayo Clinic Health System. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/9-ways-to-tame-anxiety-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

# ESTABLISHING HEALTHY BEHAVIORS THAT STICK

**A few common reasons people tend to give up on changes to behaviors include:**

## **Perceived dislike of exercise**

Studies show that people overestimate how difficult it is to exercise. As a result, you may tend to give up before you even begin a new exercise program or training regimen.

## **Toxic eating environment**

Quick, cheap and tempting food options are a constant pressure from a multibillion-dollar marketing industry. These highly targeted psychological messages may leave you wondering if you're in charge of your eating behaviors or, instead, are being conditioned to choose convenience over more nutritious options.

## **Setting too many goals or creating an all-or-nothing plan**

People tend to change too many behaviors or routines at a time. Creating restrictive changes that lead to feelings of deprivation or lower mood can result in an "on or off" or "all or nothing" plan that can't be maintained.

## **Consistency is complicated**

Whether you choose a lifelong goal or a temporary objective, staying motivated requires complex planning and follow-through. Establishing healthy behaviors that stick requires a different mindset and recognition that putting effort toward something important contributes to the promotion of an improved mood and well-being.

# ESTABLISHING HEALTHY BEHAVIORS THAT STICK

## Tips to stay motivated:

- Alter mindset and challenge negative thoughts.
- Anticipate lapses and recover quickly.
- Start with small changes and celebrate success.
- Use positive self-talk to embed identity shifts.

## Path to healthy behaviors:

- **Getting started:**
  - Set positive and realistic goals.
  - Remind yourself of the goal.
  - Identify reasons for the goal.
  - List unhealthy behaviors.
  - Choose one behavior to change.
- **Creating a plan:**
  - Brainstorm small changes.
  - Develop a strategy.
  - Identify obstacles and support.
  - Set a goal achievement date.
- **Reaching the goal:**
  - Replace destructive thoughts.
  - Plan to maintain change.
  - Acknowledge imperfections.
  - Evaluate success and restart the process for a new goal.

Lisa Hardesty, Ph. D. (2024a, February 1). Establishing healthy behaviors. Mayo Clinic Health System. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/establishing-healthy-behaviors-that-stick>

# CREATE A RESILIENT MINDSET

## SELF-REFLECTION

COMPLETE AN EMOTION-BASED AFFIRMATION STATEMENT.

EXAMPLE: WHEN I READ A BOOK, IT MAKES ME FEEL HAPPY.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL SUCCESSFUL

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL MOTIVATED.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL ENCOURAGED.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL HAPPY.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL PEACEFUL

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL LOVED.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME GROW MENTALLY.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL POSITIVE.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL VALUED.

WHEN I \_\_\_\_\_, IT MAKES ME FEEL OPTIMISTIC.

COMPLETE A TASK STATEMENT FOR A SMALL GOAL THAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE  
TODAY

EXAMPLE: I CAN FINISH AND PUT ALL THE LAUNDRY AWAY TODAY.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

COMPLETE A POSITIVE "I" STATEMENT

EXAMPLE: I AM MORE AT EASE, EVERY DAY.

I AM \_\_\_\_\_.

I AM \_\_\_\_\_.

I AM \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

I CAN \_\_\_\_\_.

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