

Lifestyle changes

Following a healthy lifestyle by keeping active, eating well, getting enough sleep, and avoiding substance use are all effective in reducing anxiety as well as improving overall wellbeing.

Exercise

Physical exercise has been shown to improve mental health. It releases chemicals in the brain that promote positive feelings. It can also reduce stress and improve sleep. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, 3-5 times a week.



If you find it hard to manage your anxiety, seeking professional help might be helpful. Professional help falls broadly into two categories:

Medication

In some cases, medication can be effective in relieving the symptoms of anxiety. Commonly used medicines are the SSRI class of antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications.

Therapy

Talk therapy, also called psychotherapy, is a way of working with negative thoughts, behaviours, and emotional responses. It can help in uncovering the underlying causes of fears, looking at situations in new, less frightening ways, and developing better coping skills.



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[Mentalhealtheeducationnimhans.org](https://nimhans.ac.in/mind-space/)

Mind space initiative:

<https://nimhans.ac.in/mind-space/>

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UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING ANXIETY



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is an emotion characterised by fear, worry, and nervousness. It causes increased alertness and physical symptoms that prepare the body to take action in a stressful situation. In itself, anxiety is a normal response to a difficult situation. However, sometimes this response is out of proportion to the actual situation. Sometimes the feelings of fear and worry are too much, and interfere with one's daily activities. This is termed as anxiety disorder.

Anxiety can manifest in many ways.

You might feel:

- stressed
- worried
- nervous
- scared
- agitated
- tired



Psychological symptoms

- feelings of intense fear or worry
- inability to relax
- difficulty concentrating
- unwanted thoughts
- irritability
- nightmares

Physical symptoms

- nausea or loss of appetite
- fatigue
- insomnia or changes in sleep patterns
- palpitations or increased heart rate
- dizziness or lightheadedness
- breathlessness
- aches and pains

Anxiety sometimes feels like:

- a knot in the stomach
- a feeling of pressure in the head
- losing control or feeling overwhelmed



Common Anxious Thoughts

MANAGING ANXIETY

Anxiety is very manageable. With the right tools and coping strategies, it is possible to reduce or eliminate anxiety completely. Common treatment strategies for anxiety include:

Relaxation techniques

Relaxation techniques are useful to reduce anxiety when it occurs. These include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, and yoga.



Building awareness

Tools like mindfulness meditation and yoga also help develop greater awareness of thoughts and emotions, which makes it easier to recognise anxiety when it occurs and to identify the thoughts that go along with it.

Hobbies

Spending time on a creative or engaging hobby like art, music, gardening, etc. can provide joy and contentment that improve mental wellbeing. So can spending time with family and friends.

