

7 Self-Soothing Techniques for Stress and Anxiety Relief

There are ways to reduce stress and anxiety. These 7 self soothing techniques will help you center yourself and find your way back to the life you want.

When you are experiencing stress or anxiety, you can have a difficult time functioning or feeling anything else. Some are able to put a mask on, show to the world that they are fine when they are in overdrive. However, masks are only temporarily effective. Finding self soothing techniques is much more useful.

We tend to burn out if stress and anxiety are left ignored. We tend to feel the weight of the world and think that if we ask for help, we are a burden. The truth is that we deserve care, respect and help if we have taken on too much. We owe it to ourselves to take a break now and then and allow for some self care. Furthermore, we need to know we are worth offering comfort to ourselves in the midst of chaos.

It's imperative to work on going from being a worrier to a warrior of inner peace.

What Causes Stress and Anxiety?

Stress and anxiety are symptoms of greater issues. This could be a time management issue, poor prioritization, mental health issues, lack of self care, or having no purpose behind what you're trying to do.

Ultimately, anyone can experience stress or anxiety, but they don't have to run your life. You can regain control and find your way back yourself and your life.

'Keep coming home to yourself.' – Aundi Kolber, therapist and author of *Try Softer*

We may become distracted, but we can always come back to ourselves. The true root of stress is that we have separated ourselves from who we are really meant to be. We try to be productive and forget to be purposeful.

Anxiety is ignited from a lack of self care and self love. Neglect of self is a contributor to how we can lose ourselves and find ourselves feeling stressed and anxious. The good news is that we can get it back.

Here are 7 self soothing techniques to help you find your way back to peace.

1. Yoga

Yoga is a great way to stretch and tone muscle and find some calm. Many find it meditative and helpful towards stress relief. A recent study^[1] found that 'practicing Hatha yoga had a promising effect on anxiety. Yoga was

also most beneficial in people who had the highest levels of anxiety at the start of the studies.' There are many more studies like this. Try it today.

Try these 8 poses for inner peace and stress relief^[2]:

1. Sukhasana
2. Uttanasana
3. Prasarita Padottanasana
4. Sasangasana
5. Vajrasana with Garudasana arms
6. Side Stretch
7. Halasana
8. Savasana

If you don't know what these poses are, you can see examples and a description through a simple Google search. Furthermore, you don't have to be a practicing yogi to be able to do them. You can use yoga whether you're a beginner or an expert to relax your body and your soul.

For more intense yoga, there are many YouTube videos you can try. Explore the internet or take a class. The point is that you can start simple and progress each day. You can challenge and condition yourself at your own pace.

Stress and anxiety will be unable to reach you as you focus on your yoga poses and stretches. Yoga can uplift you, improving overall emotional and physical wellbeing.

2. Stress Diary/Anxiety Log

Stress diaries are how we can pinpoint problems and come up with solutions for them. What is breaking you could lead to better breakthroughs if you record your stress daily. What triggers them? Keep a log. There are many benefits of a stress diary^[3], but most importantly, it can help you discover the sources of your stress so you can tackle them directly.

Record the date and time, the stressor, rate the level of stress you are experiencing or how happy you are now, how effectively you are working now, the cause of the stressor, symptoms, and how well you handled the event.

Do this as often as stress comes up or reflect on past stressful experiences. This will lead you to better understand how you cope and how you could do better in the future. It pushes you to analyze the core of what's going on. What really matters do you? Do you feel in or out of control? Why or why not?

This practice can be done using online tools^[4], or you can adapt the log to suit your own style.

You can also use this idea for an anxiety log. If you are having trouble with anxiety, note the triggers, how long it lasts, how you feel now, and how you handled it (much like you would for the stress diary). If they are one and the same — causing you both stress and anxiety — use one form to analyze the stressor.

The key is to continue using a stress diary or anxiety log so you can figure out what's wrong and find any solutions. Brainstorming solutions is something you can do as a result of this activity. You can learn better ways to solve problems simply through simple self-reflection, followed by self soothing.

3. Mindfulness

Recent research^[5] has found that mindfulness 'has many positive benefits, including lowering stress levels, reducing harmful ruminating, and protecting against depression and anxiety.'

So, how does one become mindful?

Focus first on your breath.

Then, allow your thoughts to come and go. Just observe the thoughts; do not judge them or yourself for having them. The emotion is not your identity. Overidentifying with them can be harmful. Instead, try to be mindful.

You can do this at anytime, and it can become a way of life. Becoming present helps you to look at your priorities, which in turn helps you to reduce unnecessary stressors in your life. It can be a meditation practice or something you do during any activity. Ultimately, it helps to calm you.

When we become upset, we become our emotions rather than separating our emotions from ourselves. We don't have to act on each feeling. It's about getting back into control and a calm mindset.

4. Diaphragmatic Breathing

One proven way to reduce stress is through diaphragmatic breathing.^[6] This type of breathing involves using your diaphragm and breathing so that your belly expands and falls with the breath. Generally, we tend to breathe using our chest and shoulders, which causes shallow breathing and ultimately contributes to stress.

To practice this type of breathing, get comfortable. Put your hand on you chest and your other hand on your belly. When you breathe in, your belly should expand. When you exhale, it should fall.

Take a moment to do this. You can even close your eyes if you like. Just focus on the breath and your belly rising and falling.

If you catch yourself having an anxiety or panic attack, this is also a great way to help you refocus your breathing until you are better. When you focus only on your breath, you start to feel safe. You can use that to better your situation or yourself. Just breathe.

5. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This technique involves tensing a specific muscle group and then releasing it. Research^[7] suggests that it can be 'used to control stress and anxiety, relieve insomnia, and reduce symptoms of certain types of chronic pain.'

This can be done starting from one end of the body and working your way through the entire body. For example, a common thing we do is clench our jaws. Unclench your jaw. Relax the muscles in your temples and forehead. Continue down to your neck and shoulders. Focus on nothing else. When you get to your toes, you will have relaxed the body completely. This is a great way to help yourself relax, and it's easy to do.

You can make it a habit of doing it before you fall asleep each night, or when you want to be meditative and calm. It's a great way to also realize the body is carrying your tension. All your stress and anxiety is found in

your body, and you are releasing the stress when you release the muscle tension.

6. Guided Visualization

Guided visualization is a sort of meditation that involves imagining something that helps calm you. This technique has been shown to lower blood pressure and levels of stress hormones.^[8]

There are two common visualization exercises you can try:

Containment Exercise

Visualize a container. Make it look however you want, and give it a name. Then, visualize your negative thoughts, emotions, and worries being sealed within that container and only you have the lock.

What would you like to do with this container? It contains all your stresses and anxieties. You can dump it into the ocean. You can bury it. You can throw it away. You can safeguard it. You can put it in a safe.

The visualization that you do is up to you with this container. As long as you start to feel the negative thoughts and feelings go into the container, you start to experience stress and anxiety relief.

Happy Place

Visualize your safe space or happy place, a place you can go to anytime. Visualize the details, invoking your senses. What do you see, hear, smell, touch, or even taste? Focus on these details for a bit, playing around with them in your mind. What do you call this place? Give it a name. You can visit it or change it every time you do this guided visualization.

If you want to do more guided visualizations, there are free ones online, you could take a class or practice with a mental health professional or while in a meditation.

The key is to get away from the stressors and things causing you anxiety in your mind. You regain clarity. You remove yourself so you can have control of what you think and feel and finally feel some relief.

7. Ask for Help

If you are feeling stressed and full of anxiety and have tried everything, it may be time to reach out for professional help. You may not be in control, and that's okay. You just have to get back into control. A mental health professional may be able to target why you are stressed and anxious better than you can on your own.

You are not alone. You are worth it. And if you think otherwise, your mind is tricking you. You can train it to alleviate stress and anxiety, but you may need some help, and there's nothing wrong with that.

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