

# Ways to Feel Calmer Right Now

## Take some deep breaths

When anxious, our breath becomes rapid and shallow. Deep belly breathing helps decrease anxiety by stimulating the body's relaxation response, lowering our heart rate and blood pressure. It's a powerful technique that works because you can't breathe deeply and be anxious at the same time. There are many variations to try, including this simple exercise: Inhale deeply for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 4. Repeat several times.

## Go for a walk

Exercise is one of the best anxiety remedies, immediately and long term. Going for a walk creates a diversion from your worries and releases muscle tension. Grab your headphones or earbuds on your way out; studies show that listening to music brings its own calming effects.

Long term, regular exercise triggers the release of feel-good neurochemicals in the brain, building up resilience against stormy emotions. It boosts your confidence and your mood, and you don't need to run a marathon to feel the benefits. Washing your car, hiking, gardening, a pick-up game — anything that gets you moving counts. Thirty minutes, 3 to 5 days a week can help to significantly improve anxiety symptoms, but even 10 minutes can make a difference.



## Try a mini-meditation

No matter what's causing your anxiety, take a pause and try this 3-minute meditation to anchor your mind and body in the present.

Sitting down, take a few deep breaths, in through the nose, and out through the mouth, feeling the breath move through the body, the rising sensation as you breathe in, the falling sensation as you breathe out. Do this a few times, then allow the breath to return to its natural rhythm.

Begin to focus your attention on the physical sensations, either of the weight of the body on the seat beneath you, or the feet on the floor. That's your anchor, something that doesn't change, no matter how many thoughts come and go. The moment you realize you're caught up in thought, come back to that sensation, that feeling of being grounded. It's as though you're stepping out of all the business of the mind, and just being present in the body.

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## Sip some herbal, chamomile, or green tea



If you're feeling jittery, pour a cup of chamomile or green tea. Known as a sleep aid, chamomile contains a compound called *Matricaria recutita*, which binds to the same brain receptors as drugs like Valium.

Chamomile's sedative effects may also come from the **flavonoid apigenin**. In one study at

the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center in Philadelphia, patients with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) who took chamomile supplements (1.2 % apigenin) for 8 weeks showed a significant decrease in anxiety symptoms compared with patients taking placebo. (Despite improved quality control, herbal supplements aren't regulated by the FDA the way medications are, so before taking any supplement, check with your doctor.)

Green tea, long used in Chinese medicine to treat depression, contains the amino acid L-theanine, which relieves stress, and reduces blood pressure and muscle tension. Nuts, whole grains, and broccoli are also rich in L-theanine.

## Distract yourself

If you're feeling anxious, try a distraction technique — anything that redirects your attention away from distressing thoughts or emotions. Run your fingers around the edge of your phone, put your hands under running cold water, color, or draw on a piece of paper.



Distractions work because your brain can't be in two places at once, and shifting your attention to any activity will interrupt a string of racing thoughts.

source: [www.headspace.com/articles/how-to-reduce-anxiety](http://www.headspace.com/articles/how-to-reduce-anxiety)

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