

Journey to Wellness — A free self-guided healthy living program

Reduce stress and anxiety



Stress and anxiety often go together, with stressful events or experiences triggering feelings of anxiety.

Stress is the emotional and physical reaction to life challenges.

Anxiety is ongoing and excessive worry that a person cannot control and is often related to the anticipation of a future threat or a traumatic event.

Everyone experiences some stress or anxiety in their lives. Recognizing the signs and finding positive coping mechanisms is key to self-care.

Stress that's left unchecked can contribute to health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Try these self-care ideas to reduce your anxiety and stress:

- Get active.
- Eat a healthy diet high in good nutrients.
- Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs.
- Quit smoking.
- Cut back on caffeinated beverages.
- Try yoga, meditation, controlled breathing or visualization.
- Laugh often.
- Connect with others.
- Learn to say "No" and not overextend yourself.
- Get enough quality sleep. Limit time spent watching the news, using social media or surfing the internet.
- Spend time in nature.
- Identify triggers that cause you stress or anxiety.
- Practice gratitude.
- Keep a journal.
- Find time to be creative and enjoy hobbies.

Feeling anxious?

Try the countdown to calm to help shift your focus to the present moment and away from unhealthy thought patterns. Sit quietly, look around and notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can physically feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Talk to a healthcare professional if you:

- Find it difficult to function in your daily life.
- No longer participate in activities you once enjoyed.
- Find it difficult to get out of bed.

If you are having suicidal thoughts, call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org.

Information adapted from Mayo Clinic resources: [11 tips for coping with an anxiety disorder](#), [Identifying signs of anxiety and depression](#), [Mayo Clinic Minute: Connection and creativity promote happiness](#), [Stress relievers: Tips to tame stress](#), [Stress symptoms: Effects on your body and behavior](#), and 5, 4, 3, 2, 1: Countdown to take control of anxiety.

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