Anxiety Self-Help Strategies

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Ways to Overcome Psychological Obstacles

Anxiety tends to be extremely isolating, with cycles of negative thinking feeding the disorder and stunting personal growth. Although it takes time to craft a more positive outlook, that new perspective will be the key to your wellbeing. Once you acknowledge how your mind creates and maintains your anxiety, you can use some tools to reduce the fear and frustration it brings. Let's dive into some essential anxiety self-help strategies.

Improve Your Mentality to Reduce Anxiety

You can begin to restore a healthy, even perspective with two fundamental changes in the way you mentally treat yourself and the world around you:

Allow yourself to be imperfect. Perfectionism is an issue for anxious people, and it goes hand-in-hand with insecurity. When you think in terms of absolutes (using words like “should”, “can’t”, “everybody” and “nobody”), you tend to keep unreasonably high expectations of yourself. In the end, these unfair and obsessive thought patterns will leave you feeling inadequate and anxious.

One way to stop the spiral of anxiety and fear is to change your mental phrasing. For instance, instead of thinking in terms of “if”, concentrate on what is happening right now, or on the things you know. Trust yourself. Think about your abilities in a positive light, and don’t equate “less than perfect” with failure.

Breakdown control. The need for more control can be paralyzing. When you’re feeling vulnerable, it may seem that you can make things better by controlling everything around you, but complete control is an impossible goal. Instead, accept that you can’t control life, but you can make empowered decisions.

You are responsible for your own happiness, and reactions will affect your ultimate wellbeing, measure of success and relationship with the wider world. Learning to control – and improve on – your reactions and your attitude will help you live comfortably in the moment, rather than build up worst-case scenarios in your mind.

Helpful Tools to Ease Anxiety

Although your mind is your most powerful weapon, there are certain tools that can help you form new habits to defend against anxiety:

- **A daily journal.** Structure your day to avoid idle periods when anxious thoughts can creep into your mind. Use a book with segmented pages, or a calendar format, to write in all of your activities, including hobbies, meals and exercise. The idea is to always have an activity on deck to engage or entertain you. Write down positive thoughts and achievements in the margins to stay happy and motivated.
- **Yoga props.** Whether you opt for a full yoga class or a few calming postures at home, yoga is a proven technique to restore balance and release anxious energy. Even if yoga isn’t really your thing, you’ll find

that having a mat, a foam roller and stretch belt at the ready make it easier to stretch and relax your muscles when you're feeling tense.

- **Weekly therapy sessions.** Whether you find comfort in a support group, prefer to work with a cognitive behavioral therapist or simply enjoy talk with a good friend, scheduling a weekly session is a good way to develop a trusted support system. After a few weeks, you'll begin to look forward to your set appointment. And just knowing that there's a comfortable, helpful resource in place can do wonders for chronic anxiety.

The key is to use your tools regularly, so they become a trusted source of stability and relief that you can count on in anxious times. Since anxiety feeds on fears of the unknown, try to eliminate as many unknowns as you can, and put the rest out of your head.