

Quick tips on panic attacks



Try a breathing exercise
Breathe deeply into your stomach, then breathe out slowly – make your out-breath longer than your in-breath. Repeat until you feel calm.

Reassure yourself
Tell yourself that all the symptoms you experience are caused by anxiety – it is not dangerous and it will pass. This can help you feel calmer and less fearful of future attacks.

Confide in someone
Try talking to someone you trust about how you feel.

Join a support group
This can be a useful way of meeting people who understand what you are experiencing. You can share feelings and discuss coping strategies together.

Shift your focus
Look at a flower, a picture or something that you find interesting or comforting. Really notice the details, the colours and any smells or sounds.

Listen to music
Listening to relaxing music can help you feel calmer.

Keep a diary
Note what happens each time you get anxious. This can help you spot patterns and see what triggers your panic attacks.

Create your own coping card
When you feel anxious, it can be hard to remember coping strategies that you have learned. It can be useful to write them down on a small card (e.g. phone mum, do my breathing exercise) and keep this in your bag or wallet.

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Quick tips on relaxation



Pause for thought
Introduce small moments of relaxation into your day. Take a moment to stop and look around, or close your eyes and listen to the sounds you can hear. Mindfulness techniques like this can help you to feel calmer and more in the moment.

Try a breathing exercise
Gently breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, keeping the pace slow and regular. Slowly tense then relax all the muscles in your body, starting at your toes and working up to your head. Afterwards just take some time to be still and focus on how your body feels.

Listen to some music
Your favourite tunes can help you to switch off. Tracks with a slower tempo, or designed with relaxation in mind, might be a good choice.

Try active relaxation
Gentle exercise like yoga, tai chi or Pilates, or a stroll in the fresh air, can all give you time to unwind your body and mind. Exercise also releases 'feel-good' hormones, which can help reduce depression and anxiety.

Where are you happiest?
A tropical beach? The park on a sunny day? Imagine you're there. Think of the sounds and smells around you, and how you feel. This can bring back nice memories and help you to unwind.

Keep practising
Don't worry if relaxing doesn't come naturally. Set aside some time every day, or as often as you can, to try relaxing. Find a quiet, warm space where you won't be interrupted, to help keep your mind focused and free from distractions.

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