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HEALTHLINE

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*Just remember,
you can do anything
you set your mind to,
but it takes action,
perseverance, and
facing your fears.*

- Gillian Anderson

**Dealing
with
anxiety**

**Why
sleep is
important**

**Understanding
effectiveness
of yoga**

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exercises**

Dealing with anxiety

Anxiety is characterised by feelings of extreme worry and fear which manage to interfere with one's daily activities. Stressing to an extent that one gets panic attacks and is unable to set aside the worry and focus on other things.



Here are some symptoms of anxiety:



Feelings of dread or panic



Difficulty concentrating



Racing thoughts



Overthinking about a situation



Trouble sleeping peacefully



Change in appetite

How to deal with such overwhelming emotions?



Talk to a friend:

Confiding in a friend or a family member you trust can be helpful. It is important to know that your feelings are valid and they need to be addressed. It is completely normal to feel worried and stressed, and it should be okay for you to express those worries and stress without feeling guilty.

See a therapist:

A professional is there for a reason! It is totally okay to seek help from a professional when you are feeling anxious or stressed. You may not even recognise your triggers and a professional might be able to help you understand your thought patterns better and how to cope with overwhelming emotions.

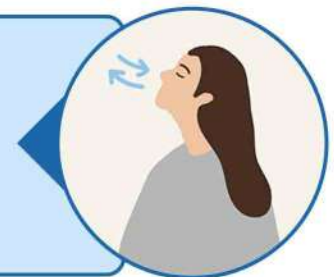


Find activities you love:

Immerse yourself in activities that help you stay calm. Having a hobby is important as it gives you a break from other triggers surrounding you while you busy yourself with something that you love.

Breathing exercises:

A guided meditation or some slow breathing exercises can help you calm your mind. There are some techniques on Page 4 that you can follow. Check them out.



To do's for caregivers:



Provide a safe space:

Provide a judgement free space for anyone who opens up to you with their feelings. Make them feel welcome and let them know you appreciate their trust in you and that they can speak to you.

No advice please:

More often than not, the person just wants to be heard without feeling burdened with unsolicited advice. Give advice only if asked by the person confiding in you. Otherwise, just be a patient listener.

Don't trivialise:

Do not respond with "But you are stressing for no reason!", "This is not a big deal.", "Others have greater problems than you..", or such statements. Do not make the person feel like their problems are trivial and therefore invalid. Respond with statements like, "I understand this must be difficult for you.", "What can I do to help?", "Would you like my advice or you need to vent?", "I'm here to listen, tell me what's bothering you...".

Recommend professional help:

If you think you are unable to help your friend and feel they need professional help, do not hesitate to suggest this. This is for their own good. However, do not be condescending when suggesting any help.

Why sleep is important

In simple terms, sleep is your body's way of recharging for another day. It is important and essential as your body works to heal your physical, mental and emotional health while you are sleeping. You may have noticed that a disturbed sleep leads to a cranky day ahead followed by lethargy or even a headache.



What happens if you don't get enough sleep?



Sleep deficiency leads to many illnesses related to physical as well as mental health like heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, obesity, and depression. Lack of sleep can interfere with work, school, driving, and social functioning. You might have trouble learning, focusing, and reacting. Also, you might find it hard to judge other people's emotions and reactions. Sleep deficiency also can make you feel frustrated, cranky, or worried in social situations.

Different stages of sleep in one night:

First comes non-REM(Rapid Eye Movement) sleep, followed by a shorter period of REM sleep, and then the cycle starts over again. Dreams typically happen during REM sleep.



Non-REM PHASE:

Stage 1:

Your eyes are closed, but it's easy to wake you up. This phase may last for 5 to 10 minutes.

Stage 2:

You are in light sleep. Your heart rate slows and your body temperature drops. Your body is getting ready for deep sleep. This can last for 10-25 minutes.

Stage 3:

This is the deep sleep stage. It's harder to rouse you during this stage, and if someone woke you up, you would feel disoriented for a few minutes.

REM Phase:

Usually, REM sleep happens 90 minutes after you fall asleep. The first period of REM typically lasts 10 minutes. Each of your later REM stages gets longer, and the final one may last up to an hour. Your heart rate and breathing quickens.

Sleeping technique to try:



- 1 First, place the tip of your tongue behind your upper front teeth.
- 2 Exhale completely through your mouth and make a "whoosh" sound.
- 3 Close your mouth, and inhale through your nose while mentally counting to 4.
- 4 Hold your breath, and mentally count to 7.
- 5 Open your mouth and exhale completely, making a "whoosh" sound and mentally counting to 8.
- 6 Repeat this cycle at least three more times.

This technique can relax you and help you fall asleep quickly.

Understanding effectiveness of yoga

Yoga is a frequently recommended stress management strategy; however, the acute stress response to varying types of yoga are not fully clear. A study called: A Comparison of the Acute Effects of Different Forms of Yoga on Physiological and Psychological Stress: A Pilot Study, released its findings in 2020 to help people understand yoga's effectiveness.



Here's what it says:

A single meditative yoga session decreases state anxiety and cortisol levels. However, a single bout of power yoga failed to impart beneficial decreases in stress. Yoga is commonly used as a stress management strategy in a variety of populations. Current data suggest that individuals looking to maximize stress relieving benefits should consider that differing types of yoga may result in varied stress responses. Specifically, these findings suggest that meditative and mindful yoga practices meditate more favorable stress reduction while more intense and strength-focused yoga does not impart the same benefit.



While currently the study was done with a small group, considering the positive findings, this will provide a good baseline for future studies to come to a specific conclusion about the practice.

Some yoga asanas to try relieving stress:



Bridge pose



Cat-cow pose



Child's pose



Standing forward bend pose

Breathing exercises:

Belly breathing:

- Sit or lie down.
- Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach somewhere above your belly button.
- Breathe in through your nose, noticing your stomach rise. Your chest should remain relatively still.
- Purse your lips and exhale through your mouth. Try engaging your stomach muscles to push air out at the end of the breath.



Equal breathing:

- Shut your eyes and pay attention to the way you normally breathe for several breaths.
- Then, slowly count 1-2-3-4 as you inhale through your nose.
- Exhale for the same four-second count.
- As you inhale and exhale, be mindful of the feelings of fullness and emptiness in your lungs.



Resonant breathing:

- Lie down and close your eyes.
- Gently breathe in through your nose, mouth closed, for a count of six seconds.
- Don't fill your lungs too full of air.
- Exhale for six seconds, allowing your breath to leave your body slowly and gently. Don't force it.
- Continue for up to 10 minutes.
- Take a few additional minutes to be still and focus on how your body feels.



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