

Free Yourself From ANXIETY

Let go of your tension and worry by taking control of the situation

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FACT!
According to the Mental Health Foundation, more than 8 million people in the UK were diagnosed with anxiety issues in 2010

“I’ve always tried to fight it”

“I get palpitations, shaky hands, go red in the face and have an inability to think straight,” says Kate Thomas. “I sort of go into a panic mode where I find



it hard to focus. It’s held me back from doing things I would like to do. It’s impacted my career progression. I also suffered badly with nerves whilst trying to learn to drive and never managed to pass a test. I’ve always tried to fight my anxiety though, and I do push myself to do a lot of things that frighten me. It feels good to know that I can overcome my fears. For example, I went travelling on my own for a few months which initially terrified me.”

I was a very anxious soul from childhood until my early 30s and now see lots of people struggling with anxiety in my practice, www.anxietyessex.co.uk,” says Eve Menezes Cunningham. “Symptoms include palpitations, dizziness, panic attacks, difficulty breathing, feeling shaky or like jelly, needing to use the toilet more frequently, increased tension in the muscles, nausea and tension headaches. Different people have different symptoms.

“Fortunately, we can help ourselves. If you’re worried about a friend, start by managing your own anxiety levels and you’ll be better able to support them.

“If you haven’t already, go to see your GP. You might also choose to see a counsellor or therapist to help you learn new ways of handling anxious symptoms in the moment as well as gaining an understanding of the root causes.

“We live in a 24/7 world which means our fight/flight response, from the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system, is triggered much more frequently than our rest/digest response

from the parasympathetic branch. This just means that we need to consciously make time to do the things that help our bodies and minds recuperate from life’s everyday stresses.

“Keeping a log is a wonderful way to get to know yourself better. Note things like thoughts that ease your anxiety and thoughts that exacerbate it. What about food and drink? What helps and what makes it worse? How about sleep and exercise?

“It’s natural for sleep to

FACT!
Fortunately, Anxiety UK found that 86% of respondents had sought professional help due to their anxiety – visit www.anxietyuk.org.uk

suffer when we’re feeling anxious as it can feel unsafe to sleep. Adding to your anxiety by telling yourself how exhausted you’re going to be tomorrow is likely to keep you in fight/flight mode, making sleep even more elusive.

“Talking kindly to yourself will help soothe the



amygdala, the brain’s alarm bell. It’s not about denying your feelings of anxiety, but letting it move from that primitive part of the brain to the prefrontal cortex where you can recognise the reality: ‘Ahh, that wasn’t an intruder creaking the floorboards but my cat!’ Avoid beating yourself up for having over-reacted. We evolved to see danger. Mistaking a twig for a snake can be embarrassing but a snake for a twig could be deadly.

“Your body and breath can also help you stay present. Feel your feet on the ground. Notice your breath. If it’s shallow, bring it down towards your belly. Maybe

make the exhalation longer. This sends signals of safety to the brain which then sends calmer feelings to your whole system.

“Befriend your anxiety. Ask what it needs from you instead of trying to get rid of it. When you make the simple changes – less stress, more support, whatever it may be for you – you may even see your anxious phase as a gift.”

FACT!
Anxiety UK identified the most common causes as financial worries, scary media stories, relationship issues and work issues.

Celebrity Sufferers



Helen Flanagan spoke out about quitting her role in *Corrie* due to her anxiety and depression, hoping that others might also seek help.



Kate Moss recently said her famous Calvin Klein underwear shoot, aged 17, left her bedridden with anxiety for two weeks.



Whoopi Goldberg couldn’t let a flying phobia keep her grounded so took a “flying without fear” course to conquer her anxiety.