

The background is a dark teal color with a textured, almost marbled appearance. There are several irregular, brush-stroke-like shapes in a golden-yellow color scattered across the teal background, primarily in the upper and lower portions of the frame. The overall effect is artistic and somewhat somber.

HOW TO COPE WITH
**ANXIOUS
THOUGHTS**

The image features a white background with two overlapping semi-circles at the top and bottom. The top semi-circle is a dark teal color, and the bottom semi-circle is a lighter teal color. The text is centered between these two semi-circles.

WHAT IS ANXIETY,
ANYWAY?



For many people, their persistent worries, sweaty palms, and intense fears in routine scenarios don't have a cause or a name for a long time.

Maybe that's you, too. It's normal to feel anxious when you face stressful moments in your life. But when that anxiety starts to take over your days and become an all-consuming, constant feeling of dread and worry, it can interrupt your life in negative ways.

Sometimes anxiety makes people feel uneasy or even sick. It can range from mild hyper-awareness or nervousness to paralyzing fears. It's also incredibly common—40 million people each year in the United States report having an anxiety disorder and it's estimated that:

**AROUND 264 MILLION ADULTS
ACROSS THE WORLD HAVE ANXIETY.**



WHY ARE WE
SO ANXIOUS?



We expect anxiety to surface during distressing seasons of life. However, the daily anxiety that many people face could be attributed to a number of factors.

Some medical professionals attribute the rising reports of anxiety in patients to factors such as poor sleeping habits or increased social media use and the effects that social media can have on mental health.

Others maintain that we're not more anxious than we were in the past, but that people are more open to talking about their anxiety. We're realizing how common anxiety is and building both communities and coping strategies to deal with it in our everyday lives.



HOW CAN WE COPE WITH
ANXIOUS THOUGHTS?



It's always wise to speak with your doctor about your anxiety and how often it occurs. There are also multiple coping techniques that many people use to manage anxiety and experience relief.

These coping strategies are particularly helpful to use as a part of daily routines to keep anxiety at bay. Here are twelve coping methods to consider and try for yourself.

PRACTICE BREATHING EXERCISES

01.

When you start to feel anxious, focusing on your breathing can help. Start with 10-15 breaths and **focus on taking slow, shallow breaths.** Inhale and exhale slowly. Some people find that shallow breaths calm their anxiety better than deep breaths. Try whichever works best for you.

Learn more about specific breathing exercises that help with anxiety [here](#).



02.

USE AN APP

We can say “there’s an app for that” about almost anything, and managing anxiety is no different. There are many apps on the market—most of them free—that are designed to help people track and address their anxiety.

Apps such as HeadSpace, Calm, Breathwrk, Dare, Moodnotes can help you manage your anxiety with breathing exercises, sleep assistance, mood tracking, and more.



GO FOR A WALK

03.

When you're looking for ways to decrease anxiety, look for spaces in your schedule to exercise more. Numerous studies have shown a clear link between a regular exercise routine and lower anxiety levels.

Additionally, making time to move more increases our levels of serotonin, the brain chemical associated with good mood and good sleep. And sleep quality has been shown to have a huge impact on anxiety.

04. START WRITING

Sometimes our anxieties are over small things that we're overanalyzing. But sometimes, they're legitimate worries that we need to deal with later. Writing as an anxiety-reducing exercise helps you clear your head and gives your anxious thoughts a place to go.

WRITE DOWN WHAT'S MAKING YOU ANXIOUS.

Not only does this get those worries out of your head, but it can also help you understand why you feel this way.

START READING

At an early age, many of us learned the value of getting lost in a good story. When we read, we lose ourselves in between the pages and enter into a whole new world with none of the anxieties we face in our real lives. Reading has been shown to lower heart rate, alleviate muscle tension, and—with just six minutes of reading time—reduce stress levels by 60%. When your anxiety rises, pick up a book, such as an engrossing fiction story, an in-depth feel-good news story, or a Bible chapter.

05.

06 ■

IDENTIFY YOUR TRIGGERS

Figuring out what triggers your anxiety most often is an important step in managing it. When anxious thoughts creep in, take notes on where you are, what you're doing, and what seems to make the anxiety worse. Look for patterns and consider changes you could make that would make anxiety episodes less common in your life.

Once you know your triggers, you might be able to change some of the places you go, things you do, how you eat, what you drink, etc. For example, if social media causes anxiety for you, you might consider eliminating it from your life or substantially reducing the amount of time you spend online.



07.

TALK TO SOMEONE

Having the people close to you listen or offer reassuring words as you process your anxious thoughts is helpful in fighting off anxiety. Build a strong group of people you can talk to or find an anxiety support group in your area.

Reach out to friends, family, pastors, and others in your network when you feel overwhelmed. They can help you talk through what's making you anxious and offer help where you need it.

08.

FOCUS ON ONE TASK AT A TIME

People who struggle with anxiety often report feeling overloaded and out of control. It helps to move from one task at a time and temporarily put aside worries about any other tasks. For example, if you need to prepare a meal, focus on one step – chopping one thing or finding one ingredient – at a time. Or if you're working, don't set your sights on everything you need to finish by the end of the week. Start with the three most urgent tasks that you need to complete that day. Writing out a physical list can help.

09.

Research has shown that a lack of sleep can be directly tied to feelings of anxiety. With this knowledge in mind, **make a plan to get at least 8 hours of sleep each night.**

Make it a priority since your anxiety levels depend on it. Going to sleep around the same time each night and waking up around the same time each morning helps keep your circadian rhythm balance and improves your sleep quality.

PRIORITIZE
SLEEP

CHANGE YOUR DIET

Caffeine, alcohol, and large amounts of sugar have been tied to aggravating or worsening anxiety. Keep a food log and pay attention to how you feel when you reduce your consumption of or cut out caffeine, alcohol, and sugar. Consider consulting a dietician or nutritionist about which anxiety-triggering foods you should avoid and how to eat a diet that helps you stay level and calm.

10.



BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF

Learning to cope with anxiety can be a slow process that requires daily practice. Give yourself grace to slow down, figure out what's bothering you, and make a plan for managing anxious thoughts. Life can become better for you and it's possible to cope with anxiety in healthy ways.

BE PATIENT AND GENTLE WITH YOURSELF.

Focus on what you can control and how you can manage anxiety, little by little and day by day.

