

# Anxiety Toolkit

Your companion for calming the Mind and regaining Control  
“Because you are not your fear and you are bigger than it.”

If you are here, chances are you have felt the tight chest, the racing mind, the endless “what ifs.” Maybe your heart pounds even when everything seems “fine.” Anxiety is real. And you are not weak, dramatic, or broken for feeling this way.

This toolkit is your guide to understanding your anxiety and learning how to navigate it, with kindness, not judgment.

## What is Anxiety?

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Anxiety is the feeling of worry, fear, or nervousness about things that might happen in the future — even if there's no real danger.

It's like your brain trying to protect you, but going into overdrive.

Clinical Anxiety is a constant, overwhelming feeling of fear or worry that doesn't go away — even when there's no clear reason.

It interferes with daily life, sleep, relationships, and decision-making.

## There are various types:

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Specific Phobias
- Panic Disorder
- Health Anxiety
- Social Anxiety Disorder

**You are not alone.**

Globally, about 1 in 13 people struggles with an anxiety disorder (WHO, 2023).



## Self-check: Am I experiencing Anxiety?

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Tick any that apply:

- ☐ I constantly worry, even when there is no clear reason.
- ☐ I avoid social situations or new experiences out of fear.
- ☐ I experience physical symptoms (racing heart, nausea, dizziness) without clear cause.
- ☐ I find it hard to relax, even during downtime.
- ☐ I fear something bad will happen, even when it is unlikely.
- ☐ I often overthink past mistakes or future disasters.

Scored 3 or more?

It is time to give yourself the support you deserve.

## What is really going on?( Psychoeducation)

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- Anxiety activates your amygdala, your brain's fear center.
- It sends a "danger!" signal, even if the threat is imagined.
- Your brain releases adrenaline and cortisol, preparing you to fight, flee, or freeze.

Long-term, untreated anxiety can rewire the brain to stay on high alert all the time.



## How Anxiety affects daily Life

### Thoughts:



### Behaviours:

- Avoidance of situations or people
- Constant tension and restlessness
- Over-preparing for simple tasks
- Irritability and mood swings
- Reassurance seeking: "Are you sure everything's okay?"

### Relationships

- Isolation from friends and family
- Misunderstandings ("You're too sensitive.")
- Strain from constant reassurance needs
- Overthinking and catastrophizing
- Strive for Perfectionism

### Physical Health:

- Headaches, IBS, muscle tension
- Chronic fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Insomnia /Sleep related issues
- Panic attacks

Anxiety does not just "live in your head." It affects your physical and mental health.

# Immediate tools to calm Anxiety

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## 1. Box Breathing (4-4-4-4 Technique)

Inhale for 4 seconds-Hold for 4 seconds-Exhale for 4 seconds-Hold for 4 seconds.  
Repeat 4 to 6 cycles.

## 2. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Name:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you feel
- 3 things you hear • 2 things you smell • 1 thing you taste

## 3. Body scan Relaxation

Starting at your toes, gently focus on each part of your body and intentionally relax it.

## 4. Hand on Heart Technique

Place your hand on your chest, breathe deeply, and say:  
*"I am safe in this moment."*

# Long-Term Strategies that work

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**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):**  
Rewires unhelpful thinking patterns.



**Mindfulness Meditation:**  
Reduces reactivity over time.



**Physical Exercise:**  
20–30 min daily reduces anxiety significantly.



**Building a Routine:**  
Predictability lowers the brain's stress response.



**Limiting Caffeine & Alcohol:**  
Both can heighten anxiety symptoms.



**Journaling:**  
Externalizes the cluttered thoughts in your head.



## Myth Busters

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### Myth

- "Anxiety means you're weak."
- "If you avoid triggers, you'll get better."
- "You can just snap out of it."
- "Only therapy works."

### Truth

- Anxiety is a brain function and not a character flaw.
- Avoidance feeds anxiety, not heals it.
- Anxiety requires support, strategies, and time to manage.
- Self-help tools and therapy often work best together.

## Language Script

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- Instead of: "I can't do this."

Try: "This feels scary, but I can take it one small step at a time."

- Instead of: "They are judging me."

Try: "That's my anxiety talking. I do not have evidence they are judging me."

## Tracking and celebrating Wins

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Use an Anxiety Log:

- Trigger
- Intensity (scale 1–10)
- Coping tool used
- Outcome)

## Celebrate progress like

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- Attending a social event even if you were anxious
- Having one less reassurance check-in
- Sleeping better after practicing breathing exercises



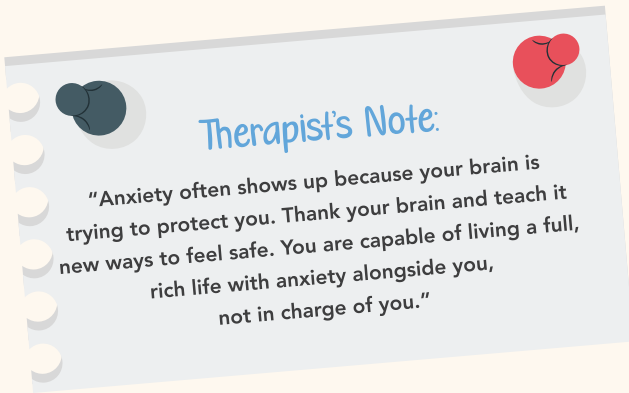
## When to Seek Help

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- Anxiety is affecting your ability to work, study, or socialize.
- You experience constant severe panic attacks.
- You engage in avoidance that shrinks your world.
- Anxiety is linked to substance abuse (alcohol, pills, etc.)
- You have suicidal ideations

**Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.**

A mental health professional can guide you through CBT, EMDR, exposure therapy, medication options, or a combination.



### Therapist's Note:

"Anxiety often shows up because your brain is trying to protect you. Thank your brain and teach it new ways to feel safe. You are capable of living a full, rich life with anxiety alongside you, not in charge of you."