

MANAGING ANXIETY THROUGH EXERCISE

In partnership with POTENTRx

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What is Anxiety?

There are two types of anxiety: state anxiety which is defined as an unpleasant emotional arousal in face of threatening demands or dangers, and trait anxiety, which reflects the existence of individual differences in the tendency to respond with state anxiety in the anticipation of a situation. There are many types of disorders associated with anxiety such as generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and phobias.

Know Your Facts!

Q: What causes anxiety disorders?

A: Anxiety disorders develop from a complex set of risk factors, including genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events.

Q: Can anxiety predispose me to different ailments?

A: Yes. Anxiety can cause somatization, or the production of multiple recurrent medical symptoms with no discernible organic cause. One may develop tension headaches, indigestion, peptic ulcers, and hypertension.

Q: How does anxiety relate to my health and health care?

A: People with an anxiety disorder are three to five times more likely to go to the doctor, and six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders than those who do not suffer from anxiety disorders.

Q: Is anxiety related to depression?

A: About one-half of those with an anxiety disorder are also diagnosed with depression and vice versa.

Q: How common are anxiety disorders?

A: Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses in the United States affecting 18% of adults.

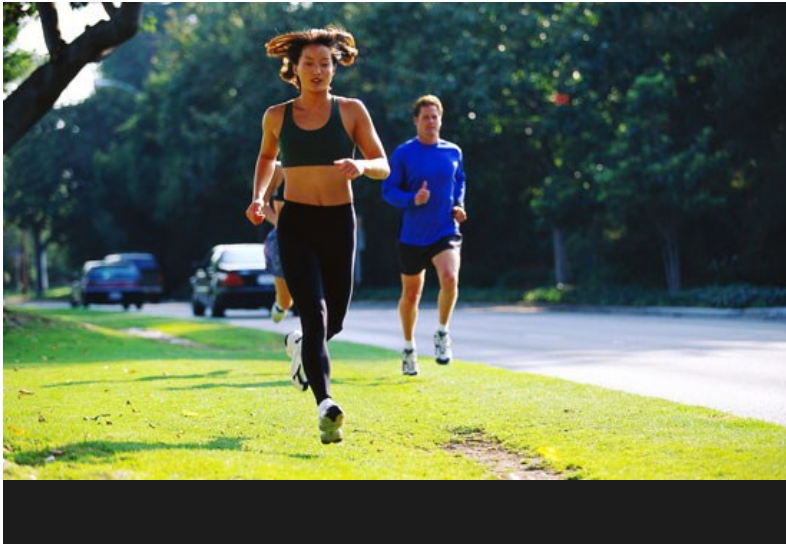
Q: Is there anything I can do to control my anxiety aside from taking medication?

A: Yes! There are many modifiable risk factors that contribute to anxiety. Please refer to the reverse side for lifestyle changes that can help to relieve anxiety.

Anxiety disorders affect 40 million adults in the United States and are treatable, yet only 33% of those suffering receive treatment.

Anxiety and Depression Association of America





What Can Lifestyle Changes Do For Anxiety?

There are many proven and recommended lifestyle changes to reduce anxiety—regular aerobic exercise being the best natural remedy for anxiety. Eating a healthy diet is also important in making sure that your body, and especially your brain, gets the nutrients that it needs to function properly. A poor diet may prevent the brain from producing certain neurotransmitters that impact our minds and brain function. Getting adequate sleep, in length and quality, is also important to maintaining good mental health. Mental training, such as meditation and positive thinking, can help us control our emotions and change our perception of the world to reduce stress and anxiety. Find sources of stress in your life and work to either reduce or avoid those stressors. You can also learn to reduce your reaction to the stressors after identifying it. Lastly, social support, such as meeting with a weekly support group or talking with friends and family regularly, can help you cope better with anxiety.



Factors of Anxiety

There is no one, definite cause of anxiety, but the following are known to increase risk for anxiety:

Modifiable Risk Factors

Lack of physical activity, poor diet, poor sleep, high levels of stress, and social interactions.

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

Life events, genetics, personality, and brain chemistry.

What Can Exercise Do For Anxiety?

Sustained aerobic exercise at least 15 minutes in duration can result in short-term reductions of anxiety symptoms in both men and women. However, bouts of aerobic exercise lasting 20-30 minutes is known to maximize these benefits. Strive to exercise 3-4 times per week for this duration to optimize the benefits of exercise and reduce anxiety. It may take up to 10 weeks to show reductions in trait anxiety, but short-term effects may be experienced following each bout of exercise. Exercising outdoors or in areas that are perceived to be more natural environments have shown to further enhance the effect of aerobic exercise on anxiety. Mindful exercises such as yoga and tai chi have also been shown to reduce anxiety and should be practiced for at least 20 minutes, 3-5 times a week.