

# NINE STEPS TO A LESS ANXIOUS LIFE



Before you reach for medication, try a little self-care. The key is to be patient with yourself, begin small practices you can do in the moment and keep it up even if you don't get results right away.

- ⇒ Are you watching your caffeine intake? Even non-anxious people can become anxiety ridden by drinking coffee or cola.
- ⇒ How much screen time are you caught in a day? Too much phone, Ipad, or TV time will fuel anxiety. Set limits around this, such as no screens after 8:00pm, or no screens on Sunday.
- ⇒ Are you practicing conscious breathing techniques throughout the day? Your breath is the quickest way to curb your anxious feelings. Here are some examples of conscious breathing techniques:
  - ◇ 3 x 6 Breathing
  - ◇ Breathe in to count of 4, hold for 2, breathe out to the count of 7
  - ◇ 4 x 4 breath (with your finger!)
  - ◇ Belly breathing
  - ◇ Dragon or bunny breathing
- ⇒ Are you regularly spending time in nature?
- ⇒ How about gentle exercise such as yoga, taking a walk, stretching, or swimming? Are you using movement to offload stress?
- ⇒ Have you been practicing mindfulness techniques? Even 30 seconds of mindful awareness practice throughout the day can begin to shift you away from anxiety.
  - ◇ Senses practice: notice what you are hearing in this moment, notice the feeling of your feet on the ground or in your shoes or socks, notice the feeling of your seat resting on the chair
  - ◇ Labeling practice: labeling thoughts as they arise as “thinking”, sensations as “sensing” and emotions as “feeling”, just notice and label
- ⇒ Have you tried a mantra or affirmation practice? Sometimes dropping into a comforting, repetitive statement when your feelings are spinning out of control can help. Some examples include repeating the word “peace” or “calm”, or the phrase “I am okay. In this moment I am okay.” Find one that you can feel in your body:
- ⇒ Are you taking time out during the day, week and month, to devote to your own nourishment, replenishment, play or creativity? The more out of balance we get with work and busy-ness, the more our anxiety will flare.
- ⇒ Have you asked: “What am I merging with?” If we merge or fuse with outside things it can activate anxiety. For example, ask yourself: Am I taking care of others to the detriment of myself? Am I working too much? Am I trying too hard to get other’s approval? Am I overdoing it with substances such as alcohol, food, shopping?