

Defined by Wikipedia as “excessive rumination, worrying, uneasiness, apprehension and fear about future uncertainties either based on real or imagined events, which may affect both physical and psychological health,” this disorder (which affects nearly 20% of Americans) can disrupt everything from day-to-day tasks to important life moments.

Though it may appear to be unstoppable without the help of over-the-counter medication, or like you have some sort of brain-freeze even though you haven't had any icecream; a reasonable reprogramming of some of our thoughts has the power to banish the anxiety and reestablish balance in our mind.

The way anxiety works is as follows:

First, you will have a thought that induces anxiety. This can be as simple as thinking about the dirty kitchen that needs cleaning to an impending project deadline at work and the subsequent feeling of not having enough time to get it done or feeling inadequate.

Second, our body picks up these “horribilizing” and “awfulizing” thoughts and feelings (thoughts that focus on the absolute worst thing that could happen even if it is not based in reality) and reacts in a centuries-old way: the fight or flight response. This means our body



turns off our “thinking” brain (the frontal cortex) and accesses the more “instinctual” brain to respond to a threat, which causes the release of hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenalin and cortisol which cause all the scary and uncomfortable feelings that come with anxiety (responsible for the increase in heart rate, etc).

Third, those released hormones cloud our thinking, making it harder to process information. At this point, someone suffering from anxiety may have trouble recalling and presenting information learned earlier in the day or just in making simple decisions.

Fourth, either the anxiety runs its course—getting worse or just tapering off on its own—or we take charge of our own mind and replace the anxious thoughts with calming ones, in which case the hormones that caused the physical feelings of anxiety will be metabolized within 3 minutes or less, and our body will stabilize. That's right! Your anxiety can be stopped within 3 minutes or less.

That's really the most important aspect of ridding yourself of anxious thoughts: replacing them with calming ones. By doing this, you establish a subconscious habit, thereby eliminating the anxious "horribilizing" and "awfulizing" thoughts forever and creating much healthier coping techniques..

As an example of how a calming thought can remedy an anxious one, picture yourself out on a daily run and then suddenly becoming anxious over all the things you have to do that day. Rather than spiral away with these anxious thoughts, mull over what a beautiful day it is outside, or that funny joke your friend told you last night, or even think of a yes or no question: "Are you going to get to those tasks done later?" "Yes." This simplifies the situation and will give you a solid solution to your anxiety, banishing it and allowing you to focus on the activity at hand.

As you better understand this process--how anxious thoughts cause changes within the body that are natural but generally unnecessary--you can regain control of your life. It is exciting to remember that each of us, within our own mind, has the ability and power to fix those anxieties, no medication needed.

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Some people appreciate receiving help in replacing anxious thoughts with empowering and calming thoughts. I have 17 years experience helping people do just that. If you feel you could benefit from less anxiety, get in touch, I use effective techniques tailored to you. Contact me for more details [watrish@aol.com](mailto:watrish@aol.com) or 920-819-3774