



One third of Americans are now showing signs of clinical anxiety or depression due to COVID-19

Taking care of your mental health is incredibly important during this challenging time in our lives. It is very normal to feel stress from living with the uncertainty, social isolation, having modified daily routines and financial pressures. During this time, you may notice and experience anxiety, fear, sadness and loneliness. Often, our existing issues can worsen during a pandemic. It is important to keep in mind a little anxiety is normal and actually good! Our anxiety is helping us as a society cope with this crisis. When we 'physically distance' we slow the spread and help to flatten the curve – which is a good thing!

One of our goals should be to prevent the spread of *panic*. We know that panic is very contagious. During this public health crisis, we can become paralyzed with fear when there is perilous uncertainty. Our fear of uncertainty lies at the source of anxiety. When we panic, our brains shift and the protective mechanism in our brains lead to a "fight, flight, or freeze" response. When we catastrophize our fears, the judgment and decision-making parts of our brain become faulty. It is important to accept that there are things that we simply cannot control. And, that's really ok for now. Accepting the uncertainty helps us gain a sense of *tolerance*. Once we focus on the things that we can control, it is especially helpful during this time to tap into our stockpile of resilience.

Human beings are resilient. Among all of this chaos and suffering, we all have one thing in common. All of us are united. We are ALL in this together. The ENTIRE WORLD is working together to help one another. Now is the time to rest your mind and body and allow creativity and resilience to shine through.

During this time in our lives, we all need to take a break to rejuvenate our mind, body and soul. Taking a short pause can help us to feel energized and ready to face the daily stressors and hurdles as we move forward.

Here is a list of **10 things** that you can do in order to feel more relaxed, balanced and relieved the current stress.

- **Go for a "physically distanced" walk** – After you wake up, go for a walk in the early morning when the air is fresh. Be mindful of every step you take including the sounds, sights and the scents around you.
- **Listen to relaxing music** – Music has the power to take us to a different sphere. Create a playlist of your favorite *relaxing* music whenever you feel stressed.
- **Meditate** – The most important place to begin is to start! Keep it simple. Dim the lights, sit alone and focus on your breathing. Know that you are *not* your thoughts. Begin to let your thoughts go. Breath, Hold, Exhale.
- **Connect with loved ones** – Reach out to friends and family during this time. Talk about your feelings. Enjoy conversations *unrelated* to the outbreak. Stay socially connected!

- **Limit your media exposure** – It is very important to limit the amount of time that you spend watching COVID-19 updates or listening to news; social media.
- **Take up a new hobby** – Wondering how to pass the time until order is restored in the world? Learn a new language or instrument. Arts and crafts – like painting or knitting has become more popular again. Many classes are offered online and are easily accessible.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle** – Get plenty of rest, keep a healthy diet and frequent hydration. Avoid excessive alcohol intake.
- **Set boundaries ahead of your workday** – Working from home has all sorts of challenges. Be sure that you put away all of your work devices and electronics at a specific time at the end time of each day and set clear hours for work. Try to confine your workspace to a designated area in your home so that it does not impede on your personal space.
- **Practice gratitude** – Make a list of all of the things that you are grateful for and jot down one thing a day.
- **Clean out a room in your home** – Donate your old clothes. Remove clutter and create more space in your home and *mind*.

Remember, the more you practice - the steadier the balance!

Stay healthy, stay safe and stay well!

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