

6 Tips to Stop Anxious Thoughts in Their Tracks.

Do you have racing thoughts and anxiety? It's hard to focus on anything else when anxiety takes control of your mind. You're filled with worries and uncertainties. You can't calm down or rest.

Fortunately, there are ways to control anxious thoughts, and it just takes practice to master the techniques.

Try these tips to control your anxiety:

1. **Distance yourself from the worrisome thoughts.** Learn to look at your anxious thoughts in a different way.
 - **The key is to reshape how you think about things.**
 - When you get an anxious thought, immediately identify it as a sign of your worry and not reality.
 - **Labeling your thoughts correctly raises self-awareness and makes it easier to control them.** It also gives you something else to focus on instead of constant worry.
2. **Ask yourself questions.** When you get an anxious thought, stop and ask yourself these questions:
 - What is the real reason for this anxious thought? What am I really afraid of?
 - Is there real danger, or is my mind simply playing games with me?
 - Is the negative outcome I'm imagining likely to happen?

- How can I stop or change these negative thoughts into something positive?
3. **View your thoughts as data.** Sometimes it's helpful to view your thoughts as data and your mind as a data processing center.
- You'll get a lot of data coming in throughout the day. Some of this data can be incorrect and confusing. This is an example of anxious thoughts.
 - You may also interpret the data incorrectly. This means you allow the anxious thoughts to take over and control you. You allow them to grow and fester.
 - **As the data processing center, you get to decide how to handle all the information.** Remember you're in control. This means you can choose to toss out or ignore the incorrect data.
 - Also, keep in mind that the brain is designed to detect danger and is hypersensitive to it. You may pick up on things that aren't even real.
4. **Focus on the present.** Many anxious thoughts are focused on either the future or the past. You can break free by focusing on the present.
- Avoid thinking too much about the past or future by interrupting these thoughts. Notice when you're thinking about the past or future and guide your thoughts back to the present moment.
 - Sometimes thoughts from the past can make you afraid of the future. **Remember that the past doesn't have to repeat itself.** You have the power to change how your future will be designed.
5. **Take action.** Anxious thoughts often prevent you from taking action. They keep you stuck in fear and worry. Learn to take action even when you're afraid.
- **Find something positive in that moment and act.**
 - Action can actually decrease the number of anxious thoughts you have on a daily basis. It can show you that there's nothing to be afraid of, that you're powerful, and that you *can* make a positive difference.



6. **Get rid of unhelpful thoughts.** Some thoughts may be true, but they aren't helpful.

- Learn to tell helpful and unhelpful thoughts apart.
- Then, start to filter out the unhelpful ones. For example, if you know that the odds of making a perfect presentation at work are low, but you still have to do it, this is an unhelpful thought. It doesn't encourage you to do your best.

Anxious thoughts don't have to control your life. You can use these tricks to effectively take control of your mind when you find yourself worrying. If these tips aren't enough, consider talking to a therapist for additional help.

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