

6 Tips for Coping with Panic Attacks

Panic attacks are episodes of intense fear and discomfort that typically last several minutes and are accompanied by physical symptoms such as palpitations, sweating, and shortness of breath. Panic attacks can be very distressing and overwhelming, but there are several things that you can do to help manage them.

Here are some recommendations:

1. **Recognize and acknowledge the panic attack:** Panic attacks can be scary, but it is important to acknowledge that what you are experiencing is a panic attack and that it will pass. Remind yourself that panic attacks are a natural response to stress and anxiety.
2. **Breathe deeply and slowly:** Deep breathing can help slow down your heart rate and calm your body. Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try counting to four as you inhale, and then count to four as you exhale.
3. **Practice mindfulness and relaxation:** Mindfulness and relaxation techniques, such as meditation or progressive muscle relaxation, can help you stay in the present moment and reduce feelings of anxiety. You can find guided meditations or relaxation exercises online or through apps like Calm or Headspace.
4. **Challenge negative thoughts:** Panic attacks are often triggered by negative thoughts and beliefs. Try to challenge these thoughts by asking yourself if they are really true or if there is another way to interpret the situation.
5. **Use positive self-talk:** Remind yourself that you are safe and that the panic attack will pass. Use positive affirmations like "I am calm and in control" or "I can handle this."
6. **Seek professional help:** If your panic attacks are interfering with your daily life or are causing significant distress, it may be helpful to seek the help of a mental health professional. They can provide you with additional coping strategies and support.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is an effective treatment for panic disorder and focuses on identifying and changing unhelpful beliefs as well as learning other behavioural and relaxation strategies.

