

## THE 4 A'S OF STRESS RELIEF CAN HELP REDUCE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY



A little anxiety from time to time is normal. You are running late to work. Your boss has already talked with you about showing up on time. You haven't been the most punctual employee in the past, and here you are, running late again. It's a common reaction to get anxious about this situation.

Did you let the cat out before you left home this morning? Are you going to make the right impression on a first date? This is the first time you are giving a presentation at work, and the company owner will be in attendance with several other company bigwigs. Are you properly prepared for this experience that can make or break your career?

These are examples of normally tense situations. Even though they aren't as unhealthy as chronic anxiety, you'd still like to avoid them. To get the upper hand on anxious feelings, whether regular or infrequent, put the four A's of stress relief to work.

- 1 - Avoid**
- 2 - Alter**
- 3 - Accept**
- 4 - Adapt**

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### **Avoid**

Extreme cases of anxiety may not be influenced by your surroundings or the people you deal with. The constant worry and obsession over something happens regardless of where and who you are with. In many cases, though, feelings of anxiety can be reduced or overcome entirely by avoiding the people, places, and things that are causing them.

This might only apply when you can control your surroundings and who you spend your time with. If you can, avoid people that make you anxious. Control your surroundings, your environment. Avoid taking on lots of unnecessary responsibilities that can ramp up your anxiety. Steer clear of things you know are likely to make you anxious.

### **Alter**

This stress reduction practice is empowering. You take action. Look at what's happening around you and attempt to change the environment or situation to create more positive feelings.

You may ask others to engage in some different type of behavior. Speak about your feelings and why you hope things can be altered to address those feelings. Changing how you manage your time is a simple way to avoid a lot of unnecessary anxiety. If you can change or alter stressors making you feel anxious, do so.

### **Accept**

Acceptance is an anxiety killer. You realize you can't avoid or alter a situation that worries you. If you can accept that most of life will be out of your control, this acceptance can replace anxiety. You act on what you can influence or control, not what you can't.

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### **Adapt**

Accepting that you, unfortunately, can't control everything provides you with another option. Why not adapt instead? If you are faced with anxiety from a situation you must constantly experience and can't control, then adapt. Develop positive mantras that make you feel good. Remember that this anxiety is a choice your emotions make and decide to feel differently.

Adjust the way you look at a situation. After you experience anxiety and nothing bad happens, remind yourself of this later. It can take the negative power out of anxiety. You look back and realize that you may have been obsessing and worrying for no reason.

***These four A's of stress relief can help you experience fewer anxious feelings. You reduce your level of anxiety and create more positive emotions. If these and your other efforts to reduce anxiety don't create the outcome you're looking for, talk to a mental health professional as soon as possible.***