

Lots of people find mindfulness tricky. They don't want to follow what they see as strict exercises (though mindfulness can be so much more than that).

These people still need to find ways to manage their anxiety. Whilst mindfulness is a really helpful way to manage anxiety, there are other activities available as well. We are all different. It's about trying out what works best for you.

Sing your heart out

Grab your hairbrush or sing into your hairdryer as I do, then the neighbors can't hear you. Singing is fun and a fantastic way to relieve anxiety.

[Cass Biron](#) LCSW, Psychedelic Psychotherapist from Brooklyn Minds Psychiatry suggests singing in the car; "singing a quick song in your car can reduce the feelings in the physical body. We all have that go-to song to scream out to and pretend we are hosting our own concert. This is stimulating the vagus nerve and toning the nervous system. There's a reason our bodies sing and dance."

Next time you are feeling some nervous energy, find a room somewhere and belt out your favorite tune. Before too long you won't care who can hear you and will be singing away at work or home and you'll be surprised when other people join in.

Tap and release

Tapping is a proven method for releasing anxiety from the body and it doesn't take long to do.

[Dr Jennifer Wolkin](#) recommends the Bilateral butterfly hug;

"A great exercise to do if you're anxious is Bilateral butterfly hug and tapping: cross your hands/arms and place them on your chest so that your middle fingers are below each collarbone.

Feel free to interlock thumbs.

Then alternate tapping your hands on your chest slowly and rhythmically for at least 8 rounds. When you do this, remember to deep breathe, so you're not holding your breath."



[Credit](#)

I like that this is a quick exercise you can try at any time during the day.

Deep breathing to music

Mindfulness might not be accessible for its “strict” practices, but deep breathing to music might be. Many people find listening to music a way to relax and let go.

[Dr Sonia Madrid Cuevas](#) suggests trying a breathwork practice to music, “there is a strong link between the breath and the nervous system, when the breath slows down the body relaxes and calms down too. Deep breathing to music is a really easy way to calm down the body and release anxiety.”

Next time you're feeling anxious, try some deep breathing to music.

Redirect nervous energy

One of the effects of anxiety is lots of nervous energy which can feel really ungrounding. [Dr Holy Schiff](#) suggests redirecting the nervous energy,

“Take control of your heightened energy and channel it into something else. Get up and walk around or pace, go outside for a couple of minutes, clean something or do a small task. These short bursts of activity can release the anxious energy.”

Short bursts of activity spread throughout the day can be more beneficial than lumping it all together and thrashing it out at the gym at the end of the day.

Roll on essential oils

Scent is a really powerful way to ground the mind and body to the present moment. I usually carry an essential oil roll-on as a little treat. There are lots of them on [Etsy](#) which means I'm supporting a local business that I like too.



[Pexels](#)

Whenever I start to feel overwhelmed I roll the scent over my wrists, neck, and under my nose and spend a few moments connecting with the lovely aromas. This always eases my anxiety and makes me feel happy as I smell good too. Win.

Ask these Q's

We are all triggered in different ways, do you know what triggers your anxiety?

[Dr Rachel Whatmough](#) suggests asking some questions to find out what those triggers are, “ If certain situations trigger your anxiety:- Ask yourself 'What is the worst thing that can happen in this situation and 'how would I cope if that happened?' so you can understand what is behind your anxiety, as well as recognizing the resources you have to cope when things go wrong.-Make sure you aren't avoiding situations that make you feel anxious as that fuels the anxiety.”

As well as helping with coping strategies, knowing what triggers your anxiety will also highlight if you are using avoidant behavior. This is when we avoid certain situations because they make us anxious.

This can make anxiety worse and also can affect your quality of life because we can stop doing the things we love because they make us anxious.

Social exercise

This list would not be complete without a mention of exercise, [Kathryn Gates](#) suggest sports or activities which involve other people,

“Adult kickball/softball leagues, a walk with a friend, joining a running group- anything that gets your heart rate up to reduce stress hormones, and connects you with other people to feel a sense of support reduces anxiety.”

Find a sport that you enjoy and remember that you can also have some fun at the same time as calming your anxiety.

As you can see there are tons of ways to calm anxiety that don't involve mindfulness. Everyone is different, it's about finding what works for you. No doubt you'll end up with a little suite of tools you can use to help manage your anxiety, the most important thing is to take control and find what works for you.

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