

# How we can deal with anxiety during stressful times

Ideas from best-selling author  
Liggy Webb



## You are not alone

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to disrupt and dominate our lives, feelings of anxiety are completely normal during these uncertain times.

Each person will be impacted in a different way and it is important to remember that you are not alone. Already there are so many stories emerging of human kindness and compassion, and of people pulling together to help and support one another.



## Managing your anxiety

**You do not need to feel alone or scared, and reaching out for support and guidance is an important part of managing anxiety through challenging times. There are many coping mechanisms that will help you to manage your anxious thoughts and balance your stress levels.**

It is worth bearing in mind that there is a great deal of advice and information in circulation – some of it very valuable and important, some of it not. So don't believe every story you read, and always fact-check against a reliable and well-evidenced source. It is also important to balance your intake of daily news and for every negative thing you hear or read, make sure that you actively seek out some positive stories that will uplift you. A healthy balance is essential for your mental health and wellbeing.

Understanding how to manage uncertainty will also help a great deal with managing anxiety. If you start to get carried away and allow yourself to imagine the worst-case scenario, you will start to feel out of control and become more anxious. While at times you may feel out of control, it is important to remember that you are totally in control of the choice you make, in terms of how you respond to these feelings. Taking life one-step at a time will help you to stay calmer. It is also extremely helpful to be optimistic and to think positively. This will help you to be able to process what is going on around you in a much more balanced way.

Positive thinking is not about ignoring what is happening and burying your head in the sand; it is more about establishing a healthy and balanced perspective. Out of every problem there is always an opportunity. By acknowledging and focusing on this, you will feel more energised and hopeful.

# Healthy habits

Establishing some healthy habits straight away will help you to look after your mental health and also avoid the negative effects of stress. Pacing yourself is an essential part of avoiding burnout, which is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. This can happen if you feel overwhelmed and emotionally drained. Managing your anxiety around stress is essential because of the impact it can have on your immune system.

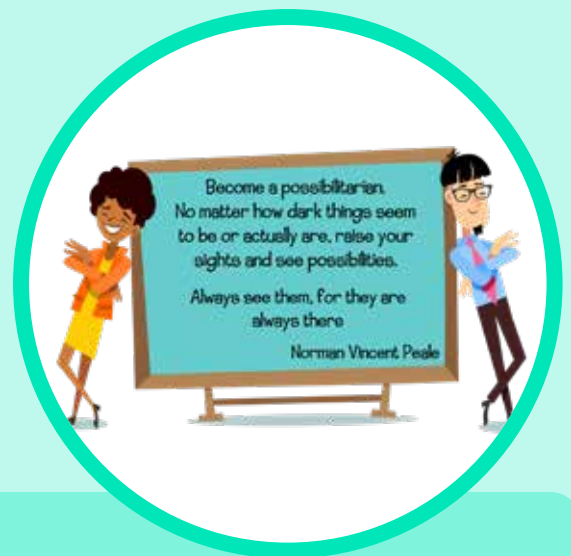
One way to stay calm and balanced is to be very disciplined about building relaxation time into your day, and this will help you to look after your overall wellbeing. Winding down and relaxing is essential for managing anxiety levels, and even just basic breathing exercises can be very beneficial. This can also help with your sleep, which is an important way of allowing your brain to consolidate your memories and process information. Sleep also helps your body to repair itself. Rest and sleep will help to ease anxiety, which in turn will help you to cope better during the day.

## In summary

**By following the advice and guidelines from the Government, who are doing everything they can to help keep us safe, we will get through this challenging time. The lessons we learn along the way will make us stronger and fitter for the future.**

Taking each day at a time and doing the small things that are within your control will help to ease the build-up of anxiety. Most important of all – be kind to yourself, take one step at a time, and remember that you are not alone. We are all in this together, and this will pass.

Learning all about the tools and techniques to manage anxiety will help you to build your personal resilience. This is an essential life skill to develop, and your ability to be resilient to stress, setbacks, adversity and change depends so much on your inner resources and strength. Being a resilient person is more than just being able to recover and survive, it is also about learning to grow and thrive.



**Liggy Webb is an award winning and bestselling author, presenter and international consultant.**

She is also the founding director of The Learning Architect, an international consortium of behavioural skills specialists. She is recognised as a thought leader on human resilience and works with a wide range of businesses focusing on optimising potential through continual learning and behavioural agility.

Liggy believes that the diversity of her clients has provided her with a tremendous insight into the many and varied challenges that people currently face in a rapidly changing and often volatile world.



# Ten tips

## for coping with coronavirus anxiety

We took some time out at this hectic time to sit down with Liggy Webb, a best-selling author specialising in life skills. Amongst other things, we discussed anxiety stemming from coronavirus. It's no surprise that people are feeling anxious. There's so much going on, self-isolation, social distancing, even queues around supermarket car parks. But, there are ways we can deal with this change.

Liggy provided some brilliant tips on how to manage the anxiety-levels as they look to creep up. Read on to discover the bitesize pieces of advice. There are ten points. And we hope they help you in some way. We can all get through this together.

1

### Limit your news intake

While you may want to keep in touch with what is going on at the moment, compulsive checking of the news will only agitate you and cause anxiety. It is advisable to limit your check-ins and avoid the news during vulnerable times of the day, such as the very first thing in the morning and right before you go to bed.

2

### Control the controllable

It is helpful to focus on the things that are within your control and establish some routines to give your day some comforting structure. Remember that even though things are happening around you that you can't control, you will always have control over the way you choose to respond. This alone is an empowering thought that can calm anxiety.

3

### Be kind to yourself

Setting aside time for yourself is all about self-care and establishing healthy boundaries. Making your wellbeing the biggest priority has nothing to do with being selfish, and no one needs to feel guilty about this. It is the most responsible approach to living a healthy and productive life.

4

### Be mindful

Being mindful and focusing on all your senses will help you to appreciate what is going on around you, in the here and now. This, in turn, may have a very relaxing effect and help you to feel calmer and less anxious.

5

### Take a deep breath

Breathing exercises can be one of the simplest ways to ease anxiety. When you focus on your breathing, it will help you to calm down and relax. Simply breathing in through your nose for a count of four, holding your breath for a count of four, and breathing out slowly through your mouth for a count of eight can be very helpful.

6

### Cope well with uncertainty

If you start to get carried away by imagining the worst-case scenario, you will begin to feel out of control and become more anxious. Take life one step at a time and avoid dwelling on the "what ifs".

7

### Be positive

A positive mindset will help you to process what is going on around you in a much more balanced way. Whenever a negative thought passes through your mind, flip it over and ask yourself what the positive alternative thinking could be.

8

### Manage your stress levels

Be aware of what triggers your stress and look at ways to minimise and avoid things, wherever possible, that may agitate you. Exercise and diet play a large part in managing stress, so create some healthy habits by staying active and avoiding too much sugar, caffeine or alcohol.

9

### Build your resilience

Resilience is an essential life skill to develop as it affects your ability to cope with stress, setbacks, adversity and uncertainty. Learning techniques to build resilience will help you to improve your inner resources and strength.

10

### Connect with others

Many people cut off all contact when they are worried and anxious; however, this is the time to reach out and get support. Each person right now will be impacted differently, and it's important to remember that you are not alone. We are all in this together.



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