

If Panic Strikes, Be Prepared

1. Learn to recognize your early signs of panic. It is easier to manage mild to moderate anxiety than full-blown panic.
2. Observe any tension in your body and release it. For example, if your hands are gripping your chair, relax your hands.
3. Take a couple of slow breaths through your nose. As you inhale say, “peace, calm, safe.” As you exhale, repeat “letting go of tension and fear.”
4. Distract yourself by talking to another person. Talking to another person will take your mind off your panic symptoms till they pass.
5. Focus on the present. Look around you and pay attention to: people, cars, and colours in a room. It will take your mind away from your anxious thoughts (5 Steps to Mindfulness exercise).
6. Do something physical to expend energy and adrenaline. If you can, go for a short walk, or do some jumping jacks.
7. Don’t fight your panic feelings. Accept them and “go with the flow.” Resisting your feelings can make them worse.
8. Use reassuring self-talk. “Anxiety is horrible, but it isn’t life-threatening.” “This isn’t an emergency - this is a panic attack, and I know what to do.” “These are just my thoughts scaring me – there is nothing dangerous here.” “I’m safe.”
9. Anger and humour can be effective in reducing anxiety. Speak directly to your fear “Get lost - I don’t have to put up with you!” “Chill out.” “So what.” Create your own statements and use what works for you.
10. Pat yourself on the back for helping yourself control the panic. It will get easier as you continue to practice your skills.