

# Exercise, exercise, exercise

Exercise can be an immediate antidote to anxious feelings. By engaging our bodies in physical activity, our brains shut off the anxious thoughts and focus on the work our bodies are doing. Remember that exercise can be found in the form of household chores. Mopping the floor can be as effective as walking in terms of turning off anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 01

## When I feel anxious, I:

- ☐ Play basketball or tennis
- ☐ Lift weights
- ☐ Bike, walk, run, swim
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Clean the house
- ☐ Play air guitar
- ☐ Do yard work
- ☐ My idea:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Exercise, exercise, exercise

Exercise can be an immediate antidote to anxious feelings. By engaging our bodies in physical activity, our brains shut off the anxious thoughts and focus on the work our bodies are doing. Remember that exercise can be found in the form of household chores. Mopping the floor can be as effective as walking in terms of turning off anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 01

## When I feel anxious, I:

- ☐ Play basketball or tennis
- ☐ Lift weights
- ☐ Bike, walk, run, swim
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Clean the house
- ☐ Play air guitar
- ☐ Do yard work
- ☐ My idea:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Repeat a mantra

A mantra is a soothing and calming short sentence. Slowly repeating a mantra can help us feel less anxious. Mantras can be simple statements like, *"I am okay."* Mantras can also be more complex. For example, *"I am enough. I am accepting of myself in this moment. I am at peace."*

Anxious Feelings 02

My mantra:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Repeat a mantra

A mantra is a soothing and calming short sentence. Slowly repeating a mantra can help us feel less anxious. Mantras can be simple statements like, *"I am okay."* Mantras can also be more complex. For example, *"I am enough. I am accepting of myself in this moment. I am at peace."*

Anxious Feelings 02

My mantra:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Refocus on things I can control

When we feel anxious, we often worry about things that are out of our control. Refocusing on what we CAN control in a situation helps us feel less anxious.

Anxious Feelings 03

When I am anxious about something I have no control over, I say to myself:

## I refocus on:

- ☐ My breathing
- ☐ How I can get support in the situation
- ☐ What I can control in the situation
- ☐ My reaction to the situation
- ☐ My idea:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Refocus on things I can control

When we feel anxious, we often worry about things that are out of our control. Refocusing on what we CAN control in a situation helps us feel less anxious.

Anxious Feelings 03

When I am anxious about something I have no control over, I say to myself:

## I refocus on:

- ☐ My breathing
- ☐ How I can get support in the situation
- ☐ What I can control in the situation
- ☐ My reaction to the situation
- ☐ My idea:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Calm my breathing

When we feel anxious our breathing tends to speed up, become more shallow, and can even lead to hyperventilating. This “over breathing” can actually increase anxious feelings, make us feel dizzy and increase our heart rate. Calm breathing can help.

Anxious Feelings 04

## To calm my breathing, I:

- Breathe in to the count of 4
- Breathe out to the count of 8
- Repeat until breathing is calm and anxious feelings decrease

## My plan to practice calm breathing:

## My plan to use calm breathing:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Calm my breathing

When we feel anxious our breathing tends to speed up, become more shallow, and can even lead to hyperventilating. This “over breathing” can actually increase anxious feelings, make us feel dizzy and increase our heart rate. Calm breathing can help.

Anxious Feelings 04

## To calm my breathing, I:

- Breathe in to the count of 4
- Breathe out to the count of 8
- Repeat until breathing is calm and anxious feelings decrease

## My plan to practice calm breathing:

## My plan to use calm breathing:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Focus on gratitude for today

Anxious feelings often come from trying to predict the future so we can avoid unpleasant surprises. But getting anxious about all the things that might happen or might go wrong doesn't change the future. Thinking about the things we are grateful for, can distract us from anxious thoughts and can soothe our anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 05

My inventory of what I am grateful for today:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Focus on gratitude for today

Anxious feelings often come from trying to predict the future so we can avoid unpleasant surprises. But getting anxious about all the things that might happen or might go wrong doesn't change the future. Thinking about the things we are grateful for, can distract us from anxious thoughts and can soothe our anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 05

My inventory of what I am grateful for today:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Listen to my anxious feelings

Although anxious feelings can be distressing, they can also be a “friend”. They can be an early warning signal pointing to something in our life that needs attention. For example, our anxious feelings may happen when we see our boss. They may be signaling that we have an important issue to resolve with our boss. Anxious feelings can be a signal that it’s time to pay attention and do something about a situation.

Anxious Feelings 06

When do I experience anxious feelings?

Is there a pattern to when my anxious feelings occur?

My anxious feelings may be signaling me to pay attention to:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Listen to my anxious feelings

Although anxious feelings can be distressing, they can also be a “friend”. They can be an early warning signal pointing to something in our life that needs attention. For example, our anxious feelings may happen when we see our boss. They may be signaling that we have an important issue to resolve with our boss. Anxious feelings can be a signal that it’s time to pay attention and do something about a situation.

Anxious Feelings 06

When do I experience anxious feelings?

Is there a pattern to when my anxious feelings occur?

My anxious feelings may be signaling me to pay attention to:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Call upon my higher power

Anxious thoughts can take on a life of their own and make us feel out of control. Calling upon our higher power can help us refocus and return to calm thinking. If a thought is escalating and making us more and more anxious, we might say, *"God, take this thought away from me. I am powerless to control it"*. We might have to repeat this each time the thought returns, but eventually it will go away.

Anxious Feelings 07

My call to my higher power:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Call upon my higher power

Anxious thoughts can take on a life of their own and make us feel out of control. Calling upon our higher power can help us refocus and return to calm thinking. If a thought is escalating and making us more and more anxious, we might say, *"God, take this thought away from me. I am powerless to control it"*. We might have to repeat this each time the thought returns, but eventually it will go away.

Anxious Feelings 07

My call to my higher power:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Use progressive muscle relaxation

Our muscles get tense when we are feeling anxious. Relaxing our bodies can release anxious feelings. We can do this exercise lying down or sitting in a chair.

Anxious Feelings 08

How anxious feelings affects my muscles:

**My progressive muscle relaxation routine:**

1. Flex my toes, hold them tight and count to 10. Then release.
2. Flex my calves, hold them tight and count to 10. Then release.
3. Repeat this for my thighs, abdomen, shoulders, hands, arms, fingers, neck and facial muscles.

**I use this when:**

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Use progressive muscle relaxation

Our muscles get tense when we are feeling anxious. Relaxing our bodies can release anxious feelings. We can do this exercise lying down or sitting in a chair.

Anxious Feelings 08

How anxious feelings affects my muscles:

**My progressive muscle relaxation routine:**

1. Flex my toes, hold them tight and count to 10. Then release.
2. Flex my calves, hold them tight and count to 10. Then release.
3. Repeat this for my thighs, abdomen, shoulders, hands, arms, fingers, neck and facial muscles.

**I use this when:**

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC



## Visualize a safe place

*"Being in crowds makes me feel unsafe and anxious. When I am on the beach by myself, I feel safer."*

If we are feeling anxious, it can be helpful to remember a time or a place when we felt safe. Maybe we were on the beach, or under the covers in our bed. We can make a mental picture of ourselves in our safe place and call it up whenever we need to self-soothe.

Anxious Feelings 09

**My safe place:** *(describe the location, what it looks like, what it smells like, how I feel when I am there):*

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Visualize a safe place

*"Being in crowds makes me feel unsafe and anxious. When I am on the beach by myself, I feel safer."*

If we are feeling anxious, it can be helpful to remember a time or a place when we felt safe. Maybe we were on the beach, or under the covers in our bed. We can make a mental picture of ourselves in our safe place and call it up whenever we need to self-soothe.

Anxious Feelings 09

**My safe place:** *(describe the location, what it looks like, what it smells like, how I feel when I am there):*

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Use a weighted blanket

Research has shown lying under a weighted blanket can help soothe anxious feelings. These blankets come in different sizes and weights. You can buy one in stores/online or even make your own weighted blanket.

Anxious Feelings 10

Where on my body do I place my blanket for maximum relief of anxious feelings?

- ☐ Cover my whole body
- ☐ Fold the blanket and only cover a certain part of my body
- ☐ My idea:

When do I use my blanket?

How long do I use my blanket?

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Use a weighted blanket

Research has shown lying under a weighted blanket can help soothe anxious feelings. These blankets come in different sizes and weights. You can buy one in stores/online or even make your own weighted blanket.

Anxious Feelings 10

Where on my body do I place my blanket for maximum relief of anxious feelings?

- ☐ Cover my whole body
- ☐ Fold the blanket and only cover a certain part of my body
- ☐ My idea:

When do I use my blanket?

How long do I use my blanket?

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Name the oppression contributing to my anxious feelings

There are many kinds of oppression that can have a negative effect on our mental and physical health. Examples of oppression include racism, homophobia, poverty and sexism. Naming the oppression we experience, how it affects us and joining with others to fight it can help.

Anxious Feelings 11

The oppression I experience:

How it affects me:

Organizations or groups I will consider joining  
(name and contact info):

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Name the oppression contributing to my anxious feelings

There are many kinds of oppression that can have a negative effect on our mental and physical health. Examples of oppression include racism, homophobia, poverty and sexism. Naming the oppression we experience, how it affects us and joining with others to fight it can help.

Anxious Feelings 11

The oppression I experience:

How it affects me:

Organizations or groups I will consider joining  
(name and contact info):

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Track how substances affect my anxious feelings

Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, marijuana and even over-the-counter medications (*e.g. cold or allergy medication*) can cause or increase anxious feelings. Tracking our use can help us figure out how substances might be causing or increasing our anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 12

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Substance I am tracking:			
Did I use?			
Intensity of anxious feelings:			
My notes:			

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Track how substances affect my anxious feelings

Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, marijuana and even over-the-counter medications (*e.g. cold or allergy medication*) can cause or increase anxious feelings. Tracking our use can help us figure out how substances might be causing or increasing our anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 12

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Substance I am tracking:			
Did I use?			
Intensity of anxious feelings:			
My notes:			

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Create structure to bind anxious feelings

Wide open, unstructured time makes some of us anxious. Having a plan for our day can help.

Anxious Feelings 13

My weekday structure:

My weekend structure:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Create structure to bind anxious feelings

Wide open, unstructured time makes some of us anxious. Having a plan for our day can help.

Anxious Feelings 13

My weekday structure:

My weekend structure:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Do one small thing

Anxious feelings can make us feel powerless. But we can empower ourselves by finding one small thing we can do when we're anxious.

Anxious Feelings 14

The anxious situation I experience:

One small thing I do:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Do one small thing

Anxious feelings can make us feel powerless. But we can empower ourselves by finding one small thing we can do when we're anxious.

Anxious Feelings 14

The anxious situation I experience:

One small thing I do:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Take action when I can

Recent events in the world, or in our neighborhoods, can make us anxious. For example, we might feel anxious about a robbery in the neighborhood, police shootings, or extreme weather due to climate change. Taking action is an antidote to anxious feelings because it makes us feel less helpless. Even small actions, like talking to a neighbor, can help.

Anxious Feelings 15

Recent event I feel anxious about:

Actions I take:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

## Take action when I can

Recent events in the world, or in our neighborhoods, can make us anxious. For example, we might feel anxious about a robbery in the neighborhood, police shootings, or extreme weather due to climate change. Taking action is an antidote to anxious feelings because it makes us feel less helpless. Even small actions, like talking to a neighbor, can help.

Anxious Feelings 15

Recent event I feel anxious about:

Actions I take:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Get to know my triggers

Sometimes anxious feelings are triggered by certain people, places and things. For example, being with family on a holiday can be an anxious feelings trigger. Knowing our triggers means we can prepare to manage anxious situations ahead of time.

Anxious Feelings 16

My triggers:	My plan:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Get to know my triggers

Sometimes anxious feelings are triggered by certain people, places and things. For example, being with family on a holiday can be an anxious feelings trigger. Knowing our triggers means we can prepare to manage anxious situations ahead of time.

Anxious Feelings 16

My triggers:	My plan:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC



# Get grounded

When we are anxious, our attention gets fixed on our distress and we lose touch with our surroundings. Refocusing on the world around us can help. We can use our senses to get grounded in the present, repeating as needed.

Anxious Feelings 17

## To get grounded, I:

1. Name out loud **5** things I can see  
(e.g.: *Leaves blowing, photo on my wall, a blue book, wooden floor, a black plug*)
2. Name out loud **3** things I can hear  
(e.g.: *A fan, people talking, the wind blowing*)
3. Name out loud **1** thing I am sensing  
(e.g.: *The wind blowing on my face*)

## I use this when:

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Get grounded

When we are anxious, our attention gets fixed on our distress and we lose touch with our surroundings. Refocusing on the world around us can help. We can use our senses to get grounded in the present, repeating as needed.

Anxious Feelings 17

## To get grounded, I:

1. Name out loud **5** things I can see  
(e.g.: *Leaves blowing, photo on my wall, a blue book, wooden floor, a black plug*)
2. Name out loud **3** things I can hear  
(e.g.: *A fan, people talking, the wind blowing*)
3. Name out loud **1** thing I am sensing  
(e.g.: *The wind blowing on my face*)

## I use this when:

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Listen to music

Music can be a great distraction from anxious feelings. For some of us, calm or soothing music helps. For others, heavy metal can help us channel our anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 18

My anti-anxiety playlist:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Listen to music

Music can be a great distraction from anxious feelings. For some of us, calm or soothing music helps. For others, heavy metal can help us channel our anxious feelings.

Anxious Feelings 18

My anti-anxiety playlist:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Use a self-affirmation to connect with others

Low self-esteem, shame, embarrassment and fear of being judged can make us keep our anxious feelings a secret. This can leave us feeling isolated and alone in our distress. Using a self-affirmation of our worth can help us reach out to others when we are struggling.

Anxious Feelings 19

**My self-affirmation:** *(example: "When I am anxious, reaching out to others is a sign of strength, not weakness.")*

## Who I reach out to:

Name:

Contact info:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

# Use a self-affirmation to connect with others

Low self-esteem, shame, embarrassment and fear of being judged can make us keep our anxious feelings a secret. This can leave us feeling isolated and alone in our distress. Using a self-affirmation of our worth can help us reach out to others when we are struggling.

Anxious Feelings 19

**My self-affirmation:** *(example: "When I am anxious, reaching out to others is a sign of strength, not weakness.")*

## Who I reach out to:

Name:

Contact info:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

My plan:

### Is my Personal Medicine powerful?

- Is it a specific activity, not a feeling/state-of-being? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do now, not a future goal? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do, not something I take? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does it say how it helps me? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Anxious Feelings Blank

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC

My plan:

### Is my Personal Medicine powerful?

- Is it a specific activity, not a feeling/state-of-being? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do now, not a future goal? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do, not something I take? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does it say how it helps me? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Anxious Feelings Blank

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

© 2021 Pat Deegan PhD & Associates, LLC