**Anxiety Prevention and Intervention**

There are many relaxation techniques that can be used for **prevention,** before you feel anxiety, and some are best used for **intervention**, at the time you feel anxiety. The more you practice the techniques as prevention, the better you will be able to use them for intervention.

**Thought-Stopping**

Let go of thoughts that cause you to feel anxious and change them to thoughts that help you feel peaceful.

Five Steps for Thought-Stopping

1. Notice that you are having a thought that causes anxiety
2. Choose a way to immediately and forcefully tell yourself to STOP this thought:

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1. Exchange the anxious thought for a peaceful thought. Plan your peaceful thought ahead of time so it’s ready immediately:

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1. Say your peaceful thought out loud or in your mind.
2. Keep your mind focused on your peaceful thought until the anxious one is completely gone.

**What’s the worst that could happen?**

When you feel anxious, you can use the question, “What is the worst that could happen?” to help lower your anxiety.

**Seeing the Bigger Picture**

Sometimes we focus so closely on one or two small details of a situation that we lose sight of the bigger picture. Focusing too closely on an anxious thought makes our anxiety level rise higher. Shifting our focus to the bigger picture can help us to feel more peaceful.

**Talking/Writing It Out**

Anxiety does not disappear if we hold feelings of anger inside. In fact, holding anxiety in can make it feel more overwhelming. Expressing anxiety by talking about it helps us to release it.

Writing can also be an effective way to express and release feelings of anxiety. We don’t need any special kind of writing talent because we are writing for ourselves only.

**EXERCISE!**

Participating in almost any kind of physical exercise can help lower our anxiety levels. Exercising on a regular basis can prevent anxiety. Exercising at the time you feel most anxious can release tension right at that moment. Remember all of those stress hormones that get released when we are anxious? Exercising is one of the best ways to release those hormones.

**Relaxed Stretching**

Stretching is simply the gentle, sustained movement of elongating your muscles. When you stretch your muscles, you help to dissipate the stress chemicals that have collected in them and you increase the blood circulation in your body, which helps relieve anxiety.

**Following Your Breath**

Breathing is a natural and effective tool for cultivating peace and decreasing anxiety within you. One way to use your breathing for this purpose is simply to be aware of is. Putting your attention on your breath for just a minute or two can help you lower the anxiety and bring yourself back to a peaceful state.

**Deep Breathing**

When people are anxious, their breath tends to be shallow and rapid. Making a conscious attempt to breathe more deeply can help you relieve anxiety.