

COVID-19: Tips for mindfulness and coping with anxiety

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Amid ever-changing information around the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are experiencing heightened stress and anxiety.

"Anxiety is not right, and it is not wrong. It is just part of the human experience," says Kristin Lothman, a mind-body counselor with Mayo Clinic's Department of Integrative Medicine and Health. "Healthy [anxiety](#) calls us into action to be safe, to take care of the people that we love and to arrive at the present moment experience with resilience."

"There are many strategies to manage anxiety," Lothman says. "I recommend developing a self-care practice. Elements of that could include journaling, exercise, yoga, meditation and prayer."

Another way to cope with anxiety is to practice mindfulness, Lothman says.

"Mindfulness is about paying attention on purpose to the present moment. And I believe mindfulness is a powerful tool we can use right now."

Lothman adds that mindfulness is about focus and awareness. "The best way I can connect is to not be distracted, to be present, to engage in eye contact," she says. To calm the body and mind, Lothman suggests a guided meditation—a practice of relaxed concentration where you follow the instructions of a narrator related to breathing and imagery. Breathing exercises are also valuable, especially for [younger children](#).

"You might practice these three or four times a day. Maybe not the entire [meditation](#) but even if you can get in 10 breathes that may be enough to notice a shift in your inner experience," Lothman says.

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