

Four Simple Techniques that Reduce Stress and Stop Anxiety in its Tracks

It is well known that stress and anxiety fuel the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. When stress is brought under control and anxiety is cut to the quick, symptoms are far less troublesome.

Everyone also knows that medicines and supplements offer the potential to suppress symptoms in the short run, but they offer little promise of long lasting effectiveness. What does offer that promise?

Answer: Learning how to calm that overactive nervous system so that all 40 hormones (give or take) in your body have the opportunity to come back into balance.

This course teaches four simple techniques that can be used **in the moment** to calm anxiety and reduce stress. I did not invent these techniques. They have been extracted and simplified from the extensive body of research which

has investigated how to reduce anxiety. Studies on anxiety have converged on discovering a small set of techniques that really do succeed in reducing anxiety.

The only reason they will not succeed is if you do not activate them when stress rears its ugly head.

The four techniques are:

- *Simple*
- *Easy to do*
- *Accessible 24 hours a day*
- *Free to access*
- *Effective*

Medications and supplements certainly help some people reduce anxiety. But when applying any one of these four techniques when needed, you do not need to wait hours for medications to take effect. Use these four techniques to take control over your anxiety rather than letting it take control over you! The four techniques are:

1. Icy Water Treatment
2. Butt Squeeze
3. Feet Focus
4. STARS

The explanation of each technique follows, one by one.

Icy Water Treatment

Two nervous systems keep us alive: the sympathetic and parasympathetic.

The parasympathetic nervous system controls all of the functions of the body (pulse, breathing, distribution of water, etc.) without our even knowing.

We activate the sympathetic nervous system when we need to be in full control (when, for example, confronting a bear when hiking in the forest or managing 20 people).

When you are anxious or have anxiety attacks, your sympathetic nervous system is running full steam ahead and the parasympathetic has been shut down for all practical purposes. The sympathetic system is in control with anxiety and is so dominant that you rarely have the mental brakes that are needed to disengage it. The fuel of anxiety is adrenaline and cortisol and other hormones.

A balance of hormones is needed for the body to generate dopamine and the other "chill out" hormones. Of the two nervous systems, the sympathetic will always overpower and overwhelm the parasympathetic which is the henpecked companion. When it comes to symptoms of

Parkinson's, the sympathetic nervous system is the bad guy and the parasympathetic is the good guy

Anxiety has to be calmed to disengage the full throttle of the sympathetic nervous system and re-activate the dormant parasympathetic nervous system (though of course it still continues to regulate our primary life functions).

OK. How in the world do you get the attention of the sympathetic nervous system to slow down and rest? You do not do this by persuasion or "hope". It seems so very complicated, eh?

Not really! You do it instantly with the icy water treatment. After all, if you want to turn someone off, don't you give them the **Icy Water Treatment**?

Here is how to set it up so that it is available when needed.

Four Anxiety Reducing Techniques That Work Every Time

1. Find a bowl large enough for your two hands to fit inside.



2. Grab an ice cube tray



3. Fill the bowl half way up or so with water.



4. Put some ice cubes in the water (or keep the bowl in the fridge).



5. When feeling anxious, immerse your two hands into the icy cold water for 10-15 seconds (or longer if you can tolerate it).



It is as easy as that!

Keep the bowl of cold water handy and readily available at home when you need it. Why not just put it in the fridge? You can use this as many times a day as needed.

When you leave home, bring a small wash rag with you. Why? You will obviously not have ready access to your bowl of icy cold water. When you need to calm down anxiety that begins to sizzle inside, just wet the wash rag in cold water (available in any bathroom) and wipe your face with it.

That will reduce your anxiety level too.

Grounding Techniques

The next two of the four anxiety reducing techniques accomplish the same thing in different ways. They both "ground" you. What in the world am I talking about here?

When you are anxious, your energy is spinning out of control. Energetic sparks are literally flying around your head and the top of your body (not your feet). Have you ever come across an electrical wire that was snapped in a storm and is flapping about in the air? You can often see electrical sparks when this happens. The loose wire is not grounded. This is precisely what the energy looks like (to healers that see energy) that is swirling around your head when you are anxious.

To ground a loose wire you have to connect the wire to a metal post in the ground. When you are anxious, that is precisely what you need to do. You will want to shift the chaotic energy swirling around your head down to your feet so it can be grounded. The two following simple techniques redirect the upper body ungrounded energy to a lower body grounded energy. It takes no time whatsoever for this to happen.

Here are the two techniques.

Butt Squeeze

You can do this technique anywhere any time without anyone even knowing you are doing it. Just squeeze your butt muscles. Keep squeezing until you feel a noticeable relief from the anxiety.

That is it folks. Do not think about it. Just do it.

Feet Focus

You can usually ground by just looking down at your feet. Now that is simple, eh? Better yet, you can rock and swish each foot to insure that the grounding has a longer term effect. There are three movements for each foot.

Do each movement 8 times.

1. With your toes firmly anchored on the ground, rotate your heel 8 times clockwise and 8 times counterclockwise.



Four Anxiety Reducing Techniques That Work Every Time

2. Rock your foot back and forth - first with your toes on the ground and heel in the air, then with your heel on the ground and toes in the air. Do this 8 times on each foot.



3. Swish each foot 8 times back and forth. STARS

No, the fourth technique does not suggest that you hang out with the stars. That would surely unground you.



STARS

See
Touch
Auditory
Remember
Smell

There is another term you may likely be familiar with which is mindfulness. This offers an instant ability to cut anxiety to the quick.

Please do not complicate the idea. The whole idea is to shut down the hamster wheel of your worrisome thoughts that cause high anxiety by bringing yourself totally and completely to the present moment.

This is a place where you have no regrets about the past (it cannot be changed) and no worries about the future (it probably will not happen anyway).

The idea, simply put, is to focus 100% of your immediate attention to “taking in” totally and completely every aspect of the surroundings (even if you are in very family surroundings like your living room).

Four Anxiety Reducing Techniques That Work Every Time

- What objects do you notice? Are they thick, thin, sharp dull and so on ...
- What is your body touching in the moment (feet on the ground, hands on a table, etc.?) How does the touch feel (cold, hot, clammy, smooth, etc.)
- What sounds do you hear (birds chirping, people talking, machines vibrating, etc.)
- When you move from one space to another, what do you remember about the previous space? What were the colors of the clothes people were wearing?
- What were the sounds? etc.
- What are the smells in the space?

In other words, activate all of the senses

See it

Touch it

Hear it (Auditory)

Remember it

Smell it

Mindfulness makes a welcome difference to reducing anxiety (and also reducing symptoms). This is why I developed a mindfulness series that extends a full year for people who experience Parkinson's symptoms. You get a mindfulness challenge each week which invites you to notice something about your world that you typically ignore.

The weekly challenges help strengthen a viable mindfulness practice. If you are a Parkinsons Recovery member, you are getting a mindfulness challenge to work with each and every week.

Both resources are discussed on the main website:

<https://www.parkinsonsrecovery.com>

Robert Rodgers PhD

Road to Recovery From Parkinsons Disease

<https://www.parkinsonsdisease.me>