

# Apocalyptic Panic Disorder: Seven tips to regain control

*Natural disasters are on the rise. The world's political climate is [becoming more turbulent and violent](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has produce chaos and strife among global economies and populations. The worrying threat of nuclear war seems like the proverbial Sword of Damocles, teetering above our heads.*

It's difficult—if not altogether impossible—not to stress out at the moment. But, that doesn't mean you need to suffer at the hands of an uncertain fate. It's nothing new for people to fear nuclear war and apocalyptic events. People around the world have been dealing with such anxieties for many decades. With that said, self-care is crucial during times of uncertainty if you want to put a stop to your panic.

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Many studies have shown that apocalyptic fears increase one's risk for psychological disorders, especially for younger sufferers. Thankfully, you can keep your mindset healthy by putting in the effort to protect your mental health.

## Addressing Your Apocalyptic Panic Disorder

Vantage Point Counseling Services therapist Michael J Salas has offered some handy tips on putting a stop to your anxiety the moment it grips you.

He recommends asking yourself key questions to rationalize

what you're feeling. The questions you should ask yourself are:

- If a specific apocalyptic event were to occur in the future, how would stressing about it right now help you?
- Do you have any evidence that a devastating event is going to take place? If so, is that evidence reliable and accurate?
- If you have evidence that a future event will occur, what information is presented to you? Could the presenters have any hidden motives for doing so?
- What's the difference between feeling worried, feeling wary, and feeling fearful? How would you define each of these feelings? Which one would you be most comfortable feeling?

It might seem silly or even redundant to ask yourself questions like these. But the reality is, they are quite essential considerations. Stressing about abstract fears and unconfirmed conspiracies offers no benefits and can take a significant toll on your health.

It's important to note that being prepared, cautious, and aware differs from being fearful. Suppose you're sure your evidence and information have come from reliable sources, maintain a clear and rational perspective about the future. In that case, you should be able to keep your panic at bay. No need to let the information you have get the better of you.

## **The Impacts of Anxiety on Your Brain**

Anxiety is one part of a large spectrum of normal, healthy emotions. It's part and parcel of being a human being; [everyone experiences anxiety and panic from time to time](#). It's becoming more and more prevalent in the modern age. We are under increasing demand to perform in every facet of our lives

amid concerning and potentially threatening developments.

You need to understand how stress and panic impact your body and your mind to tackle them. Psychologists agree that apocalyptic panic can become magnified. We tend to ruminate and focus on things that we can do little about.



Your stress likely stems from the fact that you want to gain control of a situation, but you cannot. You don't control any country's nuclear regimes. You cannot change the course of a meteor headed straight for Earth. And you can't tell a superstorm or volcano to strike at a later time to give you a chance to prepare. The reason we panic is that we fear the unknown. That is normal, but you must try to let go of things that you cannot control. Focus instead on the things you can.

## **7 Tips for Halting a Panic Attack in Its Tracks**

1. Breathe deeply. Focus on breathing slowly, in and out, through your mouth. Breathe in for four counts, hold your breath in for a second, and then breathe out for four counts.

Repeat until you feel your panic subsiding.

2. Recognize and acknowledge that you have a panic attack. Once you do this, you can reassure yourself that it will pass and everything will be alright again soon.

3. Close your eyes. Overwhelming environmental factors trigger some panic attacks. Reduce unwanted stimuli by closing your eyes and, if need be, isolating yourself in a quiet and dark space.

4. Find an object to focus on. Many people find it helpful to fixate on an object and focus all their attention on it during an attack. Note everything about your chosen object, from its shape and textures to its colors, tones, and any flaws you can see. This approach distracts your brain and may help to calm you down.

5. Relax your muscles. Like deep breathing, this approach can help quell feelings of panic by down-regulating your body's stress responses. Consciously relax your body, one muscle at a time, starting with a simple spot like your feet or hands. Once you've practiced this technique a few times, it will become more comfortable to use.

6. Think of your happy place. Where would you most like to be right now? Lounging on a sunny beach in the Maldives or exploring the shady Amazonian rain forests? Picture yourself in the place of your dreams (try to choose somewhere tranquil!) and imagine as many details about it as you can.

7. Have lavender on hand. Science has proven that lavender has exceptional soothing and relaxing properties, making it ideal for panic attack sufferers. Keep lavender essential oil close by and apply it to your temples and forearms when experiencing panic or stress. Remember, never combine lavender with benzodiazepines, as the combination can cause severe drowsiness. If you are in a tense situation, you don't want to risk not being alert.

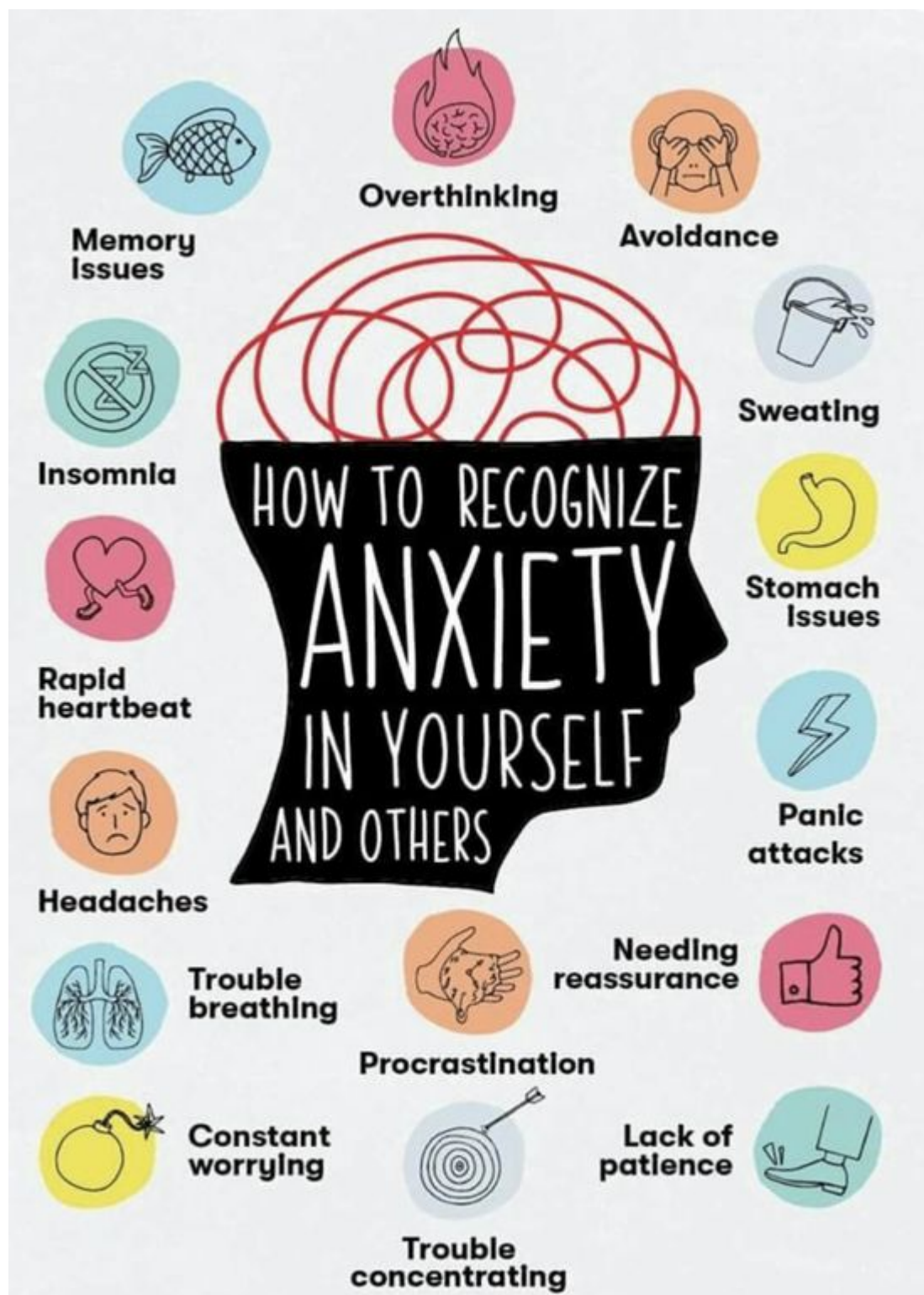
# Regaining Composure After a Panic Attack

It's all very well to offer advice like "let it go," but that's often easier said than done. If a panic attack has gripped you in the past, you will already know how challenging it can be to calm yourself down and maintain composure.

Here are three techniques that might help you regain control after an apocalyptic panic attack.

## 1. Distract yourself

If the current economic, political or environmental climate is causing you to panic, you may wish to try distracting yourself from it entirely. Instead of 'doom-scrolling' your news feed and fixating on negative developments, invest your time and energy into activities you enjoy and find relaxing. That is an excellent way to steer your mind away from stressful events and towards constructive and de-stressing activities.



You could pair these activities with goals. For example, when you take a trip into nature, take the opportunity to teach yourself about foraging for wild foods, catching fish or game, or using medicinal plants. You may feel more in control of your future with [some survival skills under your belt](#). Whatever you do, remember to be kind to yourself. Realize that it's alright to feel stressed out and afraid from time to time. Chastising yourself for feeling that way will only make

you feel worse.

## 2. Become involved

Let's circle back to feeling overwhelmed by a lack of control over events. If you are a motivated person who wants to make a difference in the world, you could also gain some control back by becoming involved. You could track down various social movements that echo your beliefs and find ways to support them. Alternatively, you could attend local events and get involved with online communities where you can express your opinions, find like-minded people, and encourage change from behind the scenes.

You might not be able to save the world from an apocalyptic event single-handedly, but that's not the goal here. The point is that you will be focusing on what you can do to help and providing some mental relief for yourself by knowing that you've played your part in inciting positive change.

## 3. Take action

If you're panicking about not having a safe shelter place to shelter, change that. Do some research into building a panic room or bunker and determine [what you'd need in case of disaster](#). Even a converted closet with [a reinforced door](#) could offer you peace of mind. You'll know you can seek shelter at a moment's notice.

Being proactive and creating a safe space where you could feasibly hole up in an apocalyptic event should help calm your fears. Even if you never use the space, you'll know it's there. That can make you feel far more confident about facing the unknown.

## Finding Solace in Community

The final and most important tip we have to help you stop your



apocalyptic anxiety is to remember that you're not alone. There are plenty of other people who are just as stressed out and anxious over the future as you are.

Don't hesitate to seek comfort in other people who see things the same way you do, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Stay connected with your loved ones and the people you care about, and if you can, act as a support system for other panic-stricken people as well.

It's also important to remember events that seem threatening at face value can end up having positive impacts, even if it's difficult to see them now. A rise in [nuclear fallout](#) threats, for example, attracts more attention to the issue, which may lead to better education and preparation, more stringent regulations, and improved prevention in the future.

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