



TIPS FOR COPING WITH NERVES

- Feeling worried through part of your body is a normal reaction to stress that can sometimes become exaggerated. These feelings are not harmful to you, just unpleasant for a short time. Give yourself permission to feel anxious; it's OK.
- Do not add frightening thoughts such as negative or disastrous consequences to these temporary nervous feelings because to do so would be inaccurate and frighten you.
- Accept your current feelings but don't focus on what might happen. Let time pass. IT WILL GO AWAY.
- When you stop adding frightening thoughts, the nervousness and fear will fade. Realize that nothing terrible will happen. The feelings are a bit distressing but NOT dangerous.
- Use good experiences when the nerves fade quickly as growth experiences to build confidence that you are making progress with overcoming your fear.
- Think about progress to date despite the difficulties you've had - think how pleased you'll be when you succeed next time.
- When you feel good, keep relaxed; don't push yourself or rush when you don't have to.
- Change "What ifs" to "So what's."

- Don't judge yourself negatively for having feelings.
- Ask yourself, "What am I telling myself that is scaring me?"
- Take slow, deep breaths through your nose when you are unusually nervous.
- Calm yourself with positive self-talk.
- Distract yourself with an enjoyable activity or thoughts of a peaceful, relaxing image; it's only anxiety.
- Get your facts straight about the way your body works. For example, some people become afraid that they will faint from breathing too fast or from racing pulse rates or quickened heartbeats, all physiological functions associated with heightened blood pressure. In fact, fainting requires your blood pressure to drop, not rise, so you should not faint when your breathing, pulse, or heartbeat is speeding up.
- Use the adrenaline from your nerves in a positive pursuit.
- Don't let a bad experience here or there scare you.
- Give yourself credit for how far you've come.
- Work off anxiety with exercise and play.
- Speak with someone you trust about your feelings.

- Do something to help others rather than to focus so much on yourself
- Avoid caffeine.
- In case feelings of fear arise, rate your fear level from zero to ten and watch it fluctuate. Notice that it doesn't stay at a high level for more than a few seconds.
- Some good things to do: sing or hum a favorite tune; read a book; do a challenging puzzle or video game; talk to a friend; pet your dog or cat; take a walk; take a warm bath; splash cold water on your face or even get your clothes wet on a warm day; clean part of the house or wash an automobile; gardening, such as pulling weeds or planting new plants; aerobic exercising such as walking, running, swimming, bicycling, or skating.
- Focus on the good things about yourself and how happy and lucky you are.
- Concentrate on things in your life that you are looking forward to.