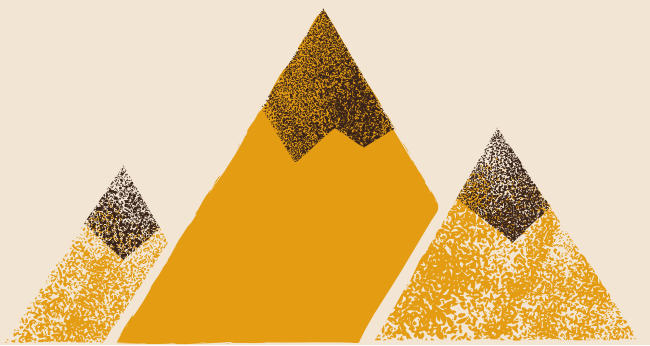


Distraction Techniques for Anxiety



Introduction

Sometimes, when we have lots of intrusive thoughts, we try to think our way out of them. However, that doesn't always seem to work. Distraction can be a way to get some distance from our thoughts and realize that they are just thoughts – not truths about ourselves or the world.

Table of contents

1. What research says
2. Distraction techniques for anxiety
3. Distraction vs Grounding Techniques for anxiety

What research says

Distraction techniques are not just effective because I say so, but rather there is scientific research showing that it is effective. There was a study conducted where participants were asked to perform the following tasks:

- Trying to suppress some distressing thoughts
- Trying to suppress the thoughts by focusing on a distraction task (focused-distraction)
- Just focusing on a distraction task (concentration)
- Thinking about anything without restrictions

In the end, it was found that focused distraction and concentration were much more efficient in reducing intrusive thoughts than actively trying to suppress the distressing thoughts. This means that making yourself busy with another task is much more helpful than just trying to not overthink or avoid thinking about something in particular. Your mind deserves a break.

Distraction techniques for anxiety

Having a few distraction techniques can be handy when having distressing thoughts. Just try to focus on something else for a few minutes. The distraction techniques will help you to absorb your focus, helping break the cycle of anxious thoughts and emotions.

However, remember that distraction techniques are short-term anxiety management techniques. Other coping skills may be more beneficial for long term benefits.

Here, I'll mention different distraction techniques that you can use:

- 1 - Go for a walk or for a jog
- 2 - Practice yoga
- 3 - Do some stretching exercises
- 4 - Do some Hula hooping
- 5 - Dance (If you don't know what to do you can watch a Just Dance video on YouTube)
- 6 - Go for a walk in nature
- 7 - Draw or doodle
- 8 - Paint, color a mandala or a coloring book
- 9 - Write in a journal or start a short story or a poem
- 10 - Build with some LEGO blocks
- 11 - Take some photos

- 12 - Try to solve a Sudoku
- 13 - Try to solve some Crossword puzzles
- 14 - Engage in trivia or quiz games
- 15 - Try to solve the Rubik's Cube
- 16 - Call or message a friend
- 17 - Spend time with loved ones
- 18 - Spend time with pets
- 19 - Listen to a podcast
- 20 - Listen to your favorite playlist
- 21 - Play a music instrument
- 22 - Read a book
- 23 - Watch a movie or a TV show
- 24 - Play a video game
- 25 - Cook your favorite meal, or try a new recipe
- 26 - Start a DIY craft
- 27 - Engage in home improvement tasks
- 28 - Plan a trip
- 29 - Try gardening
- 30 - Practice meditation
- 31 - Organize and declutter your living space.

Distraction vs Grounding Anxiety Techniques

Also, you can check out some Anxiety Grounding Techniques, which aim to bring your attention to the present moment. They involve focusing on sensory experiences or mental distractions to anchor yourself in the present moment.

Distraction techniques aim to shift your focus away from distressing thoughts, while anxiety grounding techniques aim to anchor you in the present moment. Depending on the situation and personal preferences, you may find one set of techniques more helpful than the other, or you can use a combination of both.