

# How to Walk Through A Panic Attack

A panic attack is a sudden feeling of intense and disabling anxiety or fear.

**Refocus your mind and your attention:**

1. Count backwards from 100
2. Picture faces of those you love and care about
3. Repeat the alphabet backwards
4. Spell longer words backwards (like pheasant, elephant, highway, backpack, meditation)
5. Focus your mind on the environment around you rather than on your thoughts

**Relax:**

1. Take slow deep breaths
2. Tense various muscles in your body for a few seconds and then release them
3. Allow yourself to relax as you release the tension: unclench your jaws and relax your face (this is intended to lessen the nausea that may accompany a panic attack)
4. Calm yourself by remembering that you will not be harmed—you will get through it and it will pass

**Stop negative thinking.** Negative thoughts might make a panic attack worse.

1. Think about something calming
2. Think about something enjoyable
3. Think about something exciting you are going to do this weekend
4. Think about something else that will help distract your mind from the current negative/anxious thought

**Use coping statements/ affirmations.** Remind yourself of your strengths:

1. I have survived this before.
2. I will get through this again.
3. I am a strong person.
4. I deserve a life without panic attacks.

**Slowly re-engage in physical activity:**

1. If you can stand safely, walk around slowly and practice slow deep breathing
2. Try a physical activity like cleaning, doing the dishes, vacuuming, or organizing a drawer or desk (change of focus)
3. Your body produces a lot of adrenaline during a panic attack and sitting still may cause toxins to build up in your muscles and give you cramps and aches. By engaging in a gentle physical activity like organizing, you are allowing your body to gently work off some adrenaline and turn your focus to a different activity.

**Other resources:**

[www.survivormanual.com](http://www.survivormanual.com)  
<http://www.anxietycoach.com/overcoming-panic-attacks.html>  
<http://www.exitsupportnetwork.com/recovery/panic.htm>  
[www.wikihow.com/Calm-Yourself-During-an-Anxiety-Attack](http://www.wikihow.com/Calm-Yourself-During-an-Anxiety-Attack)  
<http://www.nlppati.com/articles/end-panic-attacks.shtml>

