

When Anxiety Hits

Remember: a panic attack feels like an emergency, but it is your body's alarm system firing when there's no real danger. It is very uncomfortable and it is not dangerous. Most attacks peak within about 10 minutes and then pass.

What it can feel like

- ☐ Racing or pounding heart
- ☐ Shaking, sweating, chills, or hot flashes
- ☐ Nausea or a churning stomach
- ☐ A sudden fear you're dying or "going crazy"
- ☐ Tight chest or trouble catching your breath
- ☐ Dizzy, lightheaded, or tingling hands
- ☐ Feeling unreal or detached from yourself
- ☐ An urge to escape right now

What to do in the moment

- 1 **Name it.** "This is anxiety. It's uncomfortable, and it will pass."
- 2 **Slow your exhale.** In through your nose for 4, out through pursed lips for 6–8. The long exhale calms your body.
- 3 **Ground your senses.** Feet flat on the floor. Hold something cold. Name 5 things you see.
- 4 **Ride the wave.** Don't fight the feelings. Let them rise, peak, and fall like a wave.
- 5 **Return gently.** When it eases, sip water and go back to what you were doing if you can. Avoiding places teaches your brain they're dangerous.

Tell yourself: *"My body is trying to protect me. I am safe right now. This feeling is temporary."*

Get checked by a doctor if

- This is your first episode of chest pain, or it feels different from your usual anxiety
- You have chest pain with shortness of breath, fainting, or symptoms that don't ease. Call 911.

When to reach out: if attacks are happening often, or you've started avoiding places like stores, driving, or church because of them, panic is very treatable with therapy.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

JOHN 14:27