

## Dealing with what you can't control

There are lots of things that are outside of our control at any one time. For many centuries the main factor outside of our control was the weather. In the modern day, there are other big forces that we feel a lack of control over, such as the economy or the changing climate. Even with modern health care, it's easy to feel a lack of control whether our loved ones will become sick.

However, while we don't have the ability to influence these events directly, **we do have some control over how we think and feel about them**. Here are some techniques that can help:

### 1. Accepting negative feelings

It's natural to feel anxiety and fear in response to a stressful situation – this is after all a survival technique. We often call this response the “fight or flight” response because it originated in how we responded to physical threats.

It's important to start by recognising that these feelings are normal and it's not your fault for having them.

### 2. Controlling your triggers

You can help to reduce the amount of time you spend worrying or feeling anxious by working out what it is that triggers them. For some of us, it's constantly checking the news – see below for guidance on how to reduce your intake of news. In some cases, it might be unhelpful conversation patterns with a family member or friend that leave us feeling anxious afterwards.

If you feel yourself getting anxious, therefore, think about what triggered it – was it something you watched, read, or heard? Was it someone you spoke to?

### 3. Setting aside some time to worry

When there is something that is bothering you it's quite easy to have it playing over in your mind while you try to solve the problem. The issue is that when something is out of your control, there is no solution to find. One strategy you can try is to limit the time you spend worrying by giving yourself “worry time”.

This can be a slot of about 15 minutes every day that you devote to worrying about things. Even if you don't reach a solution by the end of that time, promise yourself not to spend more time worrying until the next day.

#### 4. Trying out some coping strategies

As well as trying to manage your worry on a day-to-day basis, it's important to have some strategies for coping when these feelings of stress and anxiety threaten to become overwhelming. There are a number of relaxation and grounding exercises you can try that are clinically proven to help you control feelings of fear, worry and anxiety. Read about them in our guide.

<https://guideposts.org.uk/wellbeing/managing-stress-anxiety/>

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