

HOW TO TREAT A PANIC ATTACK

1 Realize that you're panicking.

Panic begets panic. Do not panic about panicking. Tell yourself that you are not dying or going crazy, but experiencing an anxiety attack. This awareness will prevent the attack from escalating.

2 Loosen your clothes.

Do not tear off your dress or jacket. Open a few buttons; lower a zipper.

3 Control your breathing.

Prevent hyperventilation by slowing your breathing. Breathe into a paper bag to restore a balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your lungs.

4 Distract yourself.

Focus on a physical object in the room. While breathing into the bag, close your eyes and try to recall the location and colors of all the objects in the room.

5 Act natural.

Open your eyes. Stop using the bag. Refasten zippers and buttons. Walk. Try to smile. Tell yourself it's over and everything is fine.

6 Resume your activities.



Be Aware

- An attack usually lasts between 15 and 30 minutes. Symptoms include pounding heart, sweating, dilated pupils, trembling, dry mouth, shortness of breath or sensation of being smothered, feelings of being choked, chest pain, nausea, dizziness, sense of being detached from oneself, and fear of losing control or going crazy.
- Knowing that you can conquer the attacks will sharply reduce their occurrence. Conversely, knowing that you are prey to attacks and cannot control them may sharply increase their occurrence.

HOW TO AVOID A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN BEFORE THE WEDDING

★ Ignore minor irritations.

Avoid driving at rush hour, upgrading your computer software, dealing with a governmental agency, thinking about your job, rooting for any sports team, undertaking a plumbing project, or listening to the local news.

★ Imagine yourself in a relaxing situation.

As you visualize, hold onto something tactile—a lucky rabbit's foot or your grandmother's favorite handkerchief. Hold it again later to restore your sense of calm. If you do not have a soothing object when the panic begins, conjure up safe and peaceful images.

★ Practice yoga.

Find a quiet room and close door. Dim the lights.

- Tree pose. Stand with your feet together. Draw your left foot up your right leg until it rests on your inner thigh. Put the palms of your hands together and raise them over your head. Balance and remain still. Lower your leg and repeat with the other side.
- Child's pose. Get on your hands and knees and sit back so that your bottom touches your heels and your chest is resting on your thighs. Keep your arms alongside your body with your fingers close to your ankles and your cheek on the floor. Rest.
- Corpse pose. Remain on the floor. Turn over on

Stress-Reducing Yoga Poses



tree pose



child's pose

your back. Rest your arms and legs flat on the floor. Close your eyes and relax every muscle. Do this for as long as it takes, but for at least 5 minutes. Do not fall asleep. Get up slowly when you feel calm, or when it is time to walk down the aisle.

★ Laugh.

Rent videos of musicals from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, especially those with Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire.

★ **Go to sleep early the night before the wedding.**

Even if you cannot sleep, at least your body will be resting. Do not plan the bachelor or bachelorette party for the night before the ceremony.

★ **Eat and drink.**

Make sure you eat on the big day, even if you do not feel hungry. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and gassy, bloating foods. Remain hydrated. If you are prone to fainting, drink some juice, sugary soda, or a shot of grappa (for courage) before walking down the aisle.

★ **Elope.**

Be Aware

If something goes wrong, keep in mind that it will make for a hilarious story at anniversary parties.

**WORST-CASE
SCENARIO.**