

National Institute of Anxiety and Stress, Inc.

Conquer Your Anxiety Success Program



CD1: Chapter 10 – “Using the Anxiety Pyramid” Workbook Exercises

<http://www.conqueranxiety.com> to order
or Call 1-888-209-4061

*****Important Instructions*****

- 1 Click http://www.conqueranxiety.com/audios/Anxiety_Pyramid.wma and listen to the audio for this chapter all the way through. Just listen and take it all in. Don't worry about completely understanding everything or completing all of the workbook exercises. This allows you to familiarize yourself with the contents.
2. Then listen to the audio again, this time pausing the audio where indicated and completing each of the audio and workbook exercises. The audio and the workbook should be used simultaneously. Completing each of the exercises is key to success.

Here are the workbook contents for this chapter:

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DISCLAIMER

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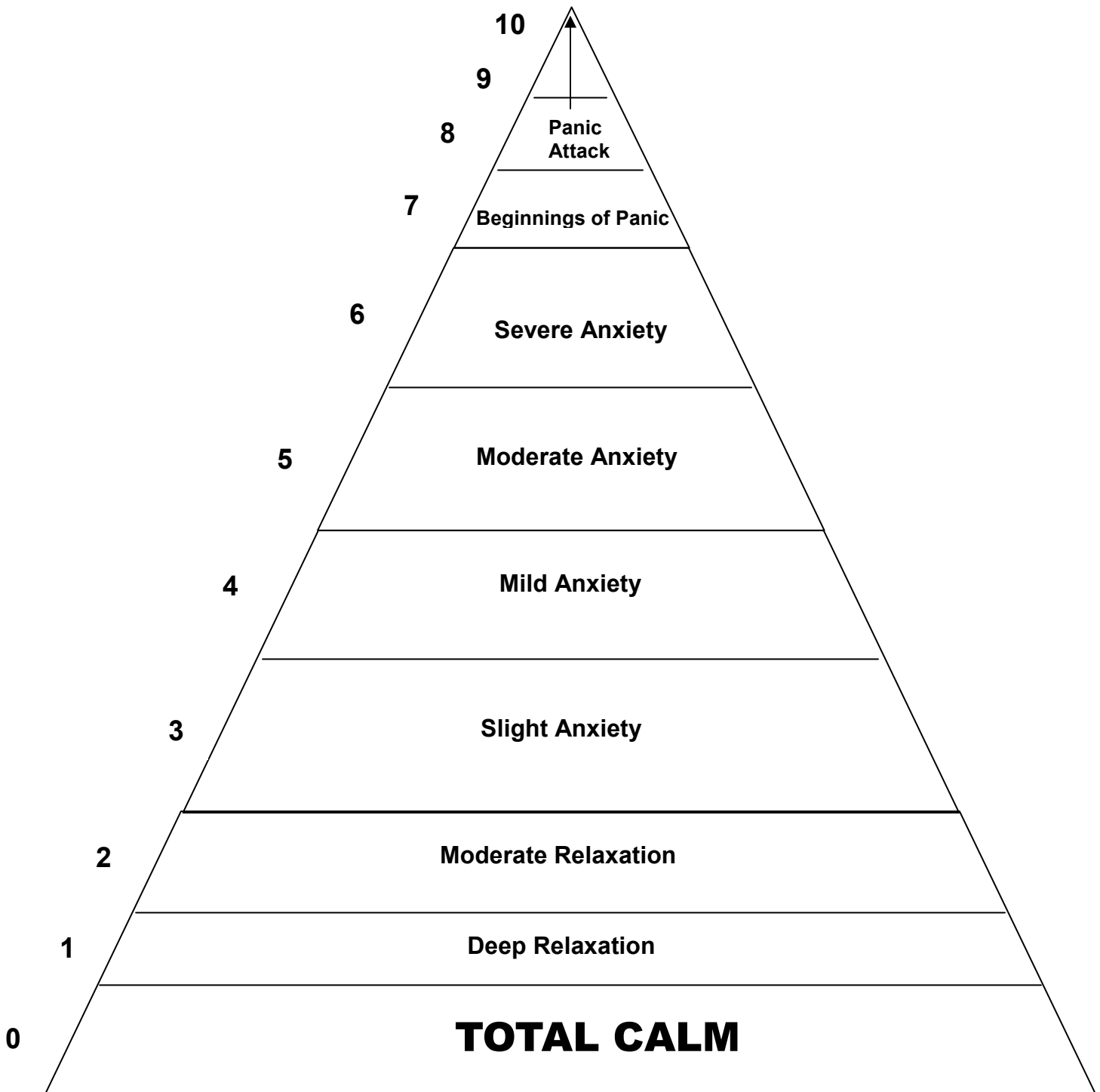
WARNING: If you wish to embark on any dietary, drug, exercise, or other lifestyle change intended to prevent or treat a specific disease or condition you should first consult a qualified health care professional regarding your specific situation. If you experience anxiety you should inform your health care professional and be open to his/her recommendations. Depending on how severely anxiety affects your daily life, you may want to combine this program with treatment strategies specified by your doctor or counselor.

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THE ANXIETY PYRAMID



USING YOUR ANXIETY PYRAMID

Instructions: Follow these steps to use the Anxiety Pyramid.

1. **“Check in”** by asking yourself: **“How do I feel right now?”**

Note: The first few weeks, you may want to perform the “check in” process at set intervals to help you remember (i.e. every hour on the hour).

2. Using the Anxiety Pyramid, **rate the level of anxiety** you feel on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most anxious.
3. Perform an **anxiety-deflating strategy that matches your anxiety level**. See the ***Anxiety Pyramid Strategies*** page for ideas.
4. After 10 minutes, **“check in” and rate your anxiety level again (steps 1 – 2)**.
5. If your anxiety level is at a level 3 or higher, **perform a new anxiety-deflating strategy** that matches your new anxiety level.
6. **Repeat** steps 1-5 until you have decreased your anxiety to below a level 3.

Note: As you become more comfortable with the process and experiment with the anxiety-deflating strategies, complete the ***Personalizing your Anxiety Pyramid*** worksheet. Then use your personalized Anxiety Pyramid instead.

Please, stick with it!

The Anxiety Pyramid becomes more effective the more you use it. It takes several weeks of consistent practice to start to realize the full benefits. Stick with you, and I think you’ll see results in terms of how quickly you’re able to reduce the level of anxiety you feel.

ANXIETY PYRAMID STRATEGIES

Anxiety Level & Description	Anxiety-Deflating Strategies
<p>8-10 Panic Attack Level 7 symptoms intensified. Full-scale panic.</p>	<p>Deep breathing; repeat a simple positive affirmation such as “This is not dangerous. I am OK”; let yourself have the panic attack and continue on with your day</p>
<p>7 = Beginnings of Panic Level 6 symptoms intensified. Believe you’ve lost control, symptoms feel disabling, wonder if you’re dying or going crazy</p>	<p>Count things (i.e. tiles in the ceiling, cars passing by); copy names and addresses from the phone book or information from the dictionary; repeat memorized information (i.e. the state capitals, coworkers’ names); do a simple physical activity like walking or jogging around the house; deep breathing; repeat a positive affirmation to yourself aloud; buzz your lips; swing your arms up and down</p>
<p>6 = Severe Anxiety More intense symptoms (i.e. heart racing, choking sensations, feel detached from body or numbness, etc.). Need to escape. Feel unable to stop mind racing and dead-end thoughts.</p>	<p>Make funny faces at yourself in the mirror; laugh a big, Santa Claus laugh; do simple math problems (i.e. count backwards from 100 to 1), do a simple activity that requires focus (i.e. cleaning your bath tub); copy down positive affirmations; write down the words to a favorite song; do a primal scream, hit your mattress with a tennis racket; demystify your symptoms; deep breathing</p>
<p>5 = Moderate Anxiety More intense symptoms. (i.e. difficulty breathing, faster heartbeat, dizziness or feeling faint, weak legs). Feel trapped, wondering if you’ll “lose it.” Fight or flight mentality.</p>	<p>Walk for 10 minutes; do 25 jumping jacks; do a Word Search or a fairly simple activity that requires mental focus; sing along and dance to favorite songs; read a boring book; do moderately simple math problems (i.e. count by 3s from 200 to 1 backwards); chat with a friend or loved one; demystify your symptoms; deep breathing</p>

Anxiety Level & Description	Anxiety-Deflating Strategies
<p>4 = Mild Anxiety Definitely know it's anxiety. Prolonged mild symptoms. (i.e. faster breathing, sweaty, some difficulty concentrating, etc.). Feel uncomfortable but still in control.</p>	<p>Any type of aerobic exercise; take 5-6 deep breaths; eat a nutritious snack; take a 10 minute break from work; start a timely discussion with a friend or coworker; do a crossword puzzle or another complex activity that requires mental focus; do complex math problems (i.e. add 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 and so on until you reach 500); take a hot bath; demystify your symptoms</p>
<p>3 = Slight Anxiety Occasional moments of nervousness. (i.e. slight muscle tension, occasional fast or shallow breathing, a dead-end thought).</p>	<p>Take 2-3 deep breaths; stretch; say a positive affirmation to yourself; squeeze and relax your shoulders; smile at yourself; do a self-care activity</p>
<p>2 = Moderate Relaxation Most muscles relaxed. Slow, even breathing. Mind can easily focus on task at hand.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>1 = Deep Relaxation Very relaxed and aware. (i.e. after exercising or deep breathing)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>0 = TOTAL CALM Relaxed muscles, mind at peace (i.e. during sleep)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

PERSONALIZING YOUR ANXIETY PYRAMID

Instructions: Once you practice the Anxiety Pyramid for a few weeks, personalize your Anxiety Pyramid to maximize your results. Fill in your description of each anxiety level in your own life (left side). Then fill in the anxiety-deflating strategies that help you for each level starting at level 3 (right side). Use this as your new Anxiety Pyramid.

Anxiety Level & Description	Anxiety-Deflating Strategies
8-10 Panic Attack	
7 = Beginnings of Panic	
6 = Severe Anxiety	
5 = Moderate Anxiety	
4 = Mild Anxiety	
3 = Slight Anxiety	
2 = Moderate Relaxation	N/A
1 = Deep Relaxation	N/A
0 = TOTAL CALM	N/A

THIRTY-FIVE ANXIETY-DEFLATING STRATEGIES

Here are some additional strategies you can use for reducing your anxiety level. Have fun with them. Use them as a starting point, and then brainstorm your own ideas. You may want to incorporate some of these strategies into your *Personalized Anxiety Pyramid*.

1. Recognize what you're anxious about.
2. Practice deep breathing.
3. Remove yourself **briefly** from the anxious situation.
4. Laugh at yourself as you watch yourself in a mirror.
5. Express your feelings to someone or write them in a journal.
6. Chat with someone to distract your mind.
7. Engage in a physical activity (i.e. take a walk, dance, etc.).
8. Do repetitious, high-focus tasks (i.e. simple math problems, copy names and phone numbers from the phone book).
9. Do something you really enjoy (i.e. take a bath, watch a movie on your VCR).
10. Practice thought stopping. For example, shout the word "Stop" in your mind whenever an anxious thought appears. Then replace it with a word like "Calm."
11. Watch your anxiety on the "big screen" as if it were a movie about someone else. Watch it like an objective observer, a member of the audience.
12. Focus intently on a person or object. For example, watch the individual hairs on your dog's head. Count the creases on the bottom of your foot.
13. Remind yourself that these sensations are completely normal fight or flight responses. It would be strange if you felt had a flight or fight response and **didn't** experience these physical reactions. You are not in danger.
14. Ask the question: "What problem do I have at this moment?" This helps you to focus on the present.

15. Tell yourself one thing you like about yourself. Repeat it aloud over and over.
16. Make silly faces at someone else, or at yourself in the mirror.
17. Pick an upbeat song as your theme song. Dance and sing aloud to it in a confident voice.
18. Eat a nutritious snack. Then distract yourself for 10-15 minutes and notice how much better you feel.
19. Watch an engaging TV program.
20. Pet an animal.
21. Give or receive physical affection.
22. Visualize your center of gravity being your feet. You are a 100-year-old oak tree and you are centered and steady. The anxiety symptoms are the breeze. They simply float by you. You are unaffected by them.
23. Have a mental picture of your “anxiety beast.” Picture it as an animated cartoon character, harmless and funny. Distort the beast’s physical characteristics to make him look funny when you feel anxiety coming on.
24. Treat the anxiety symptoms as you would a mischievous child. Give it the constructive attention it needs without giving in to its temper tantrums.
25. Visualize the anxiety as a little child. Hug the child and tell it there is nothing to worry about. You are here for him or her. The symptoms are not dangerous and are a momentary interruption.
26. Connect with nature (i.e. watch the trees or the stars).
27. Go to an online support group and talk about what’s going on inside.
28. Give yourself permission to feel anxious.
29. Give yourself permission to have an attack if needed. Have the attack in a safe environment. Then continue with your day.
30. Tell yourself that if you have an anxiety attack it’s no big deal. It won’t affect your day.
31. When the anxiety beast appears, think of it as a silly, goofy monster that is playing a game with you and trying to scare you into anxiety. Call its bluff.

Talk to it. Tell it off. Tease it. Show it you're not afraid of it.

32. Wear a rubber band around your wrist. Snap it each time you have an anxious thought and replace it with a positive affirmation.
33. Visualize you tripping up the anxiety beast: i.e. it slips on a banana peel, you smack it with a huge pillow, you douse it with your squirt gun, etc.
34. Make noises. For example, if your face is numb or trembling try buzzing your lips for as long as you can.
35. Give yourself a designated time and place every day to feel anxious for twenty minutes. Set your timer. Use the time to express your anxiety however you like (yell, write your anxious thoughts in a journal). Once the buzzer rings, stop and continue with your day.

This is the end of CD 1: Chapter 10. For more information on the **Conquer Your Anxiety Success Program**, visit: <http://www.conqueranxiety.com>