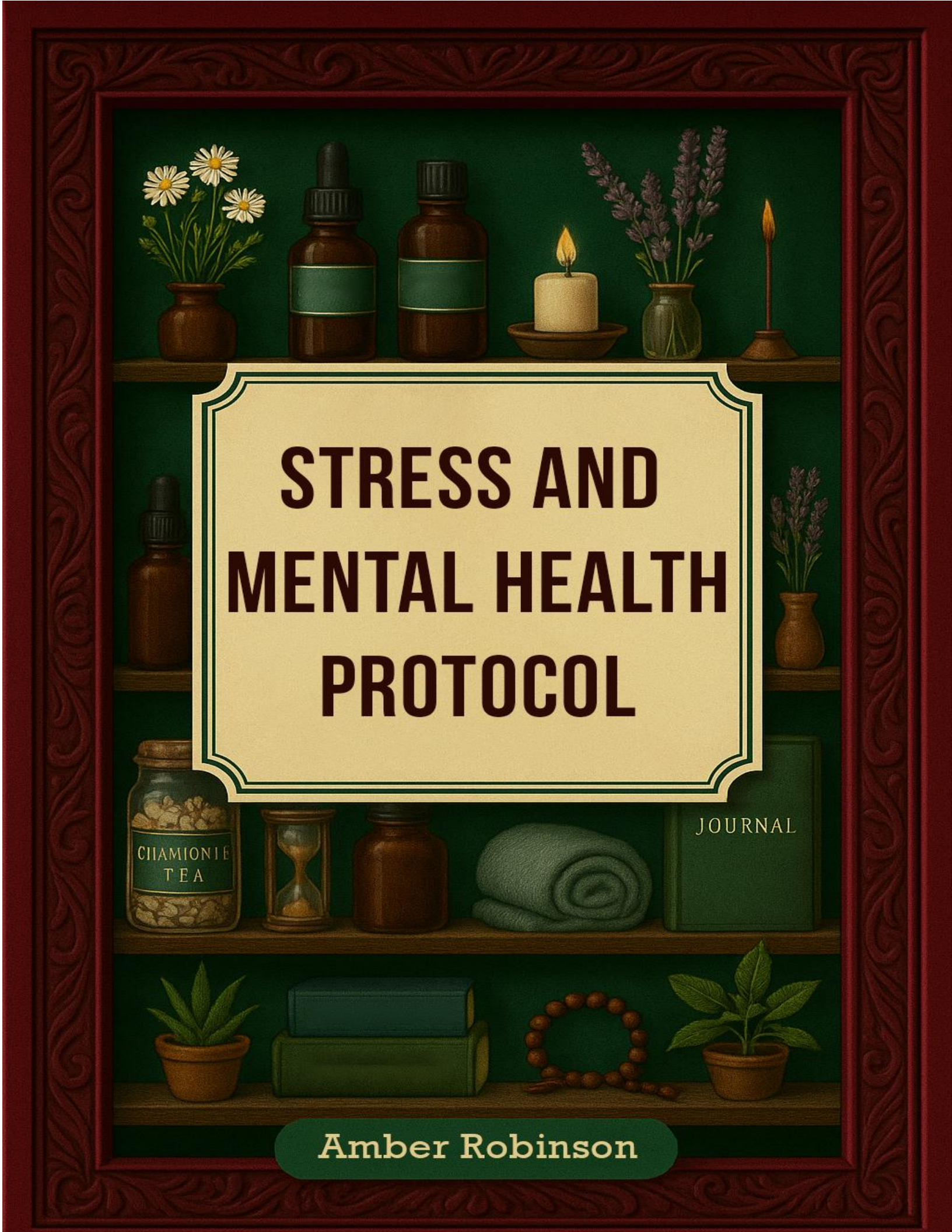




STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROTOCOL

Amber Robinson

Stress and Mental Health Protocol

- Amber Robinson -

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a condition that many people deal with each day, but the majority of people dealing with anxiety may not even know they have a problem. Living with it can become so second-nature that many people just think the way they feel is normal. Sometimes, you may go through seasons where your anxiety is worse than usual. Sometimes anxiety lurks deep under the surface and isn't as easy to spot.

Learning to spot the signs of anxiety is key to tackling this debilitating problem once and for all. Ask yourself these questions regarding anxiety:

- ❖ Do you feel overwhelmed a lot? For example, the laundry is too much to handle, so you just give up. The house is too messy, so you shut down and avoid cleaning it. The thought of sitting down to pay bills is too much to handle, so you keep putting it off.
- ❖ Do your senses feel heightened in a bad way? For example, every noise sets you off and makes you livid. The lights in the room are too bright. Every touch is extremely annoying.
- ❖ Do you sometimes feel sick to your stomach, have back and neck pain (caused by the constant stress), or get headaches a lot? The body demonstrates physical reactions to mental and emotional pain, and these symptoms are very commonly associated with anxiety.
- ❖ Do you suffer from panic attacks?
- ❖ Do you feel alone a lot, even in a room full of people?
- ❖ Do you have trouble sleeping?
- ❖ Do you feel on edge a lot? This could manifest itself with your attitude towards your family and children. Do you find yourself lashing out at them for minor issues?
- ❖ Does your mind race a lot and think of every possible scenario before it happens so you can be “prepared”? Do you imagine the worst?

These are some common manifestations of anxiety. If you answered “yes” to many of these, you may have an anxiety disorder that needs addressed before it causes more issues with your mental and physical health. Anxiety and depression sometimes go hand –in-hand. Constant anxiety takes its toll on the body and mind, resulting in feelings of hopelessness and depression.

Ask yourself the questions below to see if you have any symptoms of depression. You may notice that some of the symptoms align with anxiety symptoms listed above. This is because the two issues can very often accompany or trigger each other:

- ❖ Do you feel constantly sad, anxious, or empty?

- ❖ Do you feel hopeless or pessimistic?
- ❖ Have you experienced a loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies or activities you once enjoyed?
- ❖ Do you feel guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness?
- ❖ Do you suffer from insomnia or sleep too much?
- ❖ Have you noticed decreased energy or fatigue?
- ❖ Do you notice constant headaches, stomach complaints, or pain and doctors cannot figure out why?
- ❖ Do you feel restless or irritable a lot?
- ❖ Have you experienced a loss of appetite or overeating?
- ❖ Do you have thoughts of death or suicide?

If you have experienced any of the symptoms above, you may be dealing with severe anxiety or depression. The good news is that both anxiety and depression can be treated. There is definitely hope! In this book you will learn how to manage anxiety and depression, as well as the causes of anxiety and depression so you can tackle these issues at the root of the problem.

1. CAUSES OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

In order to figure out the best course of action for anxiety and depression, one must first determine why they feel this way. Below are some common reasons why many people suffer from anxiety and depression. Keep in mind that anxiety and depression may be caused by one or more of the factors below, so you can employ multiple courses of action to target them based on your needs and situation:

1.1. WEIGHT

Weight can trigger anxiety and depression, but not in the way one might think. Researchers are beginning to find that anxiety and depression are strongly tied to weight gain due to classic symptoms of these conditions being overeating and fatigue/sleeping/inactivity.

The problem arises when those suffering from anxiety and depression become obese as a result of their mental health. Then the fact they are now obese takes its toll and causes even more harm to the person both physically and mentally. It can become a vicious cycle.



There is still much debate on which comes first for most people, but the majority of researchers are beginning to think that the data points to anxiety and depression leading to obesity and not the other way around. This is not to say that weight gain cannot lead to depression, because this does happen as well. One thing that is known for sure is that managing weight and getting to a healthy weight can boost the mood in many ways.

For starters, getting to a healthy weight makes a person feel better about themselves and raises their self-esteem. Secondly, a healthy weight causes a person to feel better physically. They have less joint pain, less inflammation, and can get around easier. Finally, a person who works on managing their weight and being healthy demonstrates self-care by paying attention to what they eat

and nourishing their body with healthy foods. This in turn leads to feelings of positivity and a positive view of self. Just the act of eating healthy and maintaining a diet of nourishing foods can help improve the mood due to all the beneficial nutrients a person gets each day.

If you think that weight is an issue for you or a factor behind your anxiety or depression, make sure to read more about weight loss in the “solutions to fight anxiety and depression” section of this book to learn healthy and effective strategies that encourage weight loss.

1.2. LACK OF EXERCISE/MOVEMENT

As previously mentioned, when a person is depressed or anxious, they may not feel like doing much. They often feel like sleeping a lot and don’t want to get out and be active. All this inactivity over time can lead to weight gain, muscle loss, and decreased overall health. While a lack of movement may be the result of depression and anxiety, for other people, this can be the other way around.

There are some people who get stuck in a rut of inactivity due to their job or other factors that tie them down. They may want to get out and exercise but feel like they can’t for whatever reason. Over time, they may experience anxiety and depression as a result of the constant inactivity.

If you feel like you are suffering from anxiety or depression caused by inactivity, there are steps you can take now to combat this. Read more in the “solutions to fight anxiety and depression” section below.

1.3. HORMONAL

Hormones control so much more than most people realize. They directly affect mood, especially for women. Most women can attest that they experience mood swings before or during their menstrual cycles.

This is often caused by fluctuating hormones at this time of the month. For some women, these hormones never level out or balance, resulting in constant mood swings.

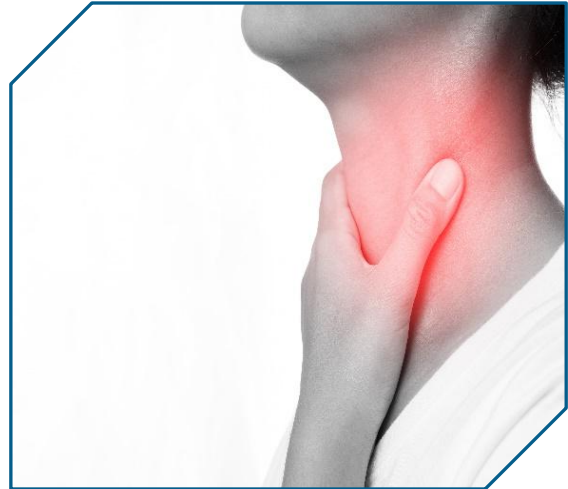
Men may also experience issues with mood as a result of unbalanced hormones. As men age, they produce less testosterone, which can cause issues with low sex drive and depression. The good news is that there are natural solutions for both men and women who need hormonal balance so they can enjoy life without anxiety or depression.

1.4. THYROID

If you notice that you went from being positive and active to depressed and inactive in recent years, it may be time to have your thyroid checked.

The thyroid is a vital hormone gland responsible for regulating metabolism, growth, and development. When the thyroid isn't functioning as it should, you may notice changes in mood, fatigue, weight gain, constipation, dry skin and hair, and a puffy face.

If you suspect your thyroid is to blame, there are solutions to help get your thyroid to function properly so you can feel more like yourself again. See the natural remedies for thyroid health in this book to learn more about what you can do.



1.5. SUNLIGHT AND DISCONNECT WITH NATURE



The sun plays a much bigger role than most of us realize when it comes to our mood. Just as plants need the sun to thrive, we need the sun to be healthy and happy. Whether we realize it or not, our serotonin levels are much higher on bright sunny days than on rainy or cloudy days.

Serotonin is a vital chemical our brain produces that helps lift the mood, bring feelings of satisfaction and calmness, and lower depression and anxiety.

Most depression medications actually focus on raising serotonin levels because it is so vital to our mood. Years ago, a doctor named Dr. Normal Rosenthal coined a term for “winter blues” he called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Since then, this condition has been accepted as a legitimate and science-based problem affecting many people.

Those who suffer from SAD do so because they are exposed to significantly less sunlight in the winter months. This results in feelings of depression. He found that this could be corrected by having these people view light boxes that simulate natural sunlight. To this day, light boxes are a popular treatment for people with SAD and can help them feel re-energized and able to face each day with a more positive attitude. Just as sunlight is necessary for our health, being in nature is vital to our overall health and wellbeing.

For man’s entire existence, we spent most of our time outdoors, whether it was foraging, hunting, collecting water, or just enjoying the beauty of nature. This is ingrained in us. In the past century, people have started spending more and more time indoors rather than being out in nature. As a result, anxiety and depression are much higher now than ever before.

Studies have linked being out in nature to higher serotonin levels. It is vital to reconnect with nature in order to elevate the mood and overall health.

1.6. UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

We have probably all been there. However, some of us deal with unhealthy relationships more than others. Although many unhealthy relationships are with partners, a lot of unhealthy relationships are with our own family.

We may not even recognize that the relationship is unhealthy until we take a step back and assess the situation more carefully. Learn to recognize the signs of an unhealthy relationship so you can take steps to address the issue. Some signs that you may be in an unhealthy relationship include:

Control: Does one person make all the decisions in the relationship? Do they tell you what to do and who you can spend time with? Do they dictate what you wear? Do they try to isolate you from friends or loved ones?

Dishonesty: Are you lied to frequently? Is information kept from you? Does this person steal from you?

Dependence: Does this person tell you they cannot live without you or threaten to do something to themselves if you end the relationship?

Privacy Invasion: Does this person look through your person items like your computer or phone? Do they use social media to keep tabs on you or watch your movements with a tracking app? Do they constantly message you and expect an immediate response?

Disrespect: Does the person demonstrate disrespect, hostility, intimidation, or harassment towards you? Are they violent with you or threaten violence?

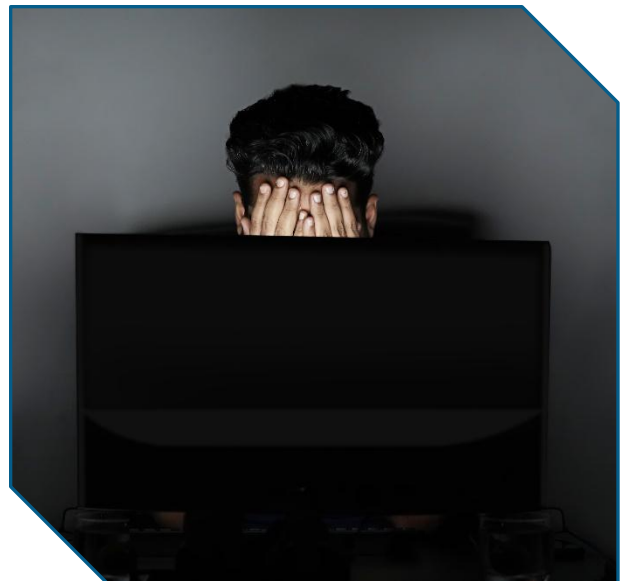
If you see any red flags like the ones mentioned above, it may be time to distance yourself from this person. They are likely causing the majority of the anxiety and depression in your life. Once you are able to get away, it will feel like a weight off your shoulders and you can finally be yourself and breathe. See suggestions for seeking help and setting healthy boundaries in this book so you can approach relationships with an awareness of what your boundaries are.

1.7. LACK OF SELF CARE AND OVERWORKING

In the past few years, working from home has become the norm for a majority of people. While working at home can be great for many reasons, it has also caused issues with time management. When people work in an office, they often have set hours where they are allowed in to work and then most people go home around the same time as well.

Those working from home have their laptop or computer there with them all the time and the line between normal work hours is blurred as a result. Staring at a screen at all hours of the day and night comes with some issues, such as increased risk of insomnia (blue light from screens triggers this), anxiety, and depression. This isn't just exclusive to people who work from home.

There are also people who overdo it at their job and don't know when to quit. As humans, we are not meant to work long hours, day and night. This will eventually take its toll on our physical and mental health. Learn to know when it is time to work and when it is time to quit. If you work from home, have a separate work space that isn't in your living space.



Take some time for self-care so you can unwind and enjoy life. Remember, there is more to life than your job! See self-care tips in this book for more on how to unwind and care for your needs.

1.8. GRIEF AND TRAUMA

Naturally, grief and trauma are quite often the cause of anxiety and depression. When we go through something traumatic or the loss of a loved one, it can be very hard to cope. The feelings of sadness and grief can linger and turn into depression.

Life is full of loss and trauma, and it helps to find healthy ways to cope. This could be talking to someone, joining a grief support group, professional counseling, and finding other ways to get past the grief and move on. See helpful remedies to aid with grief and trauma in the natural remedies section of this book.

2. SOLUTIONS TO FIGHT ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Now that you learned more about the various causes of anxiety and depression, start trying to determine what may be causing your anxiety or depression. Remember, it can be one of the triggers mentioned above, or a combination of several. Once you have pinpointed the cause, you will be more equipped to begin a targeted treatment protocol.

Below are solutions for fighting anxiety and depression according to the issues discussed above. Feel free to try one or a combination of several of the suggestions below to maximize the effects of the protocol.

2.1. WEIGHT LOSS/DIET

According to some studies, more than two out of every three adults are overweight or obese. Over the decades, these numbers have skyrocketed and they seem to be growing in unison with the amount of people suffering from anxiety and depression.

Weight loss can be a powerful tool for fighting anxiety and depression because it does so much to help self-esteem, self-care, and encourages a healthy lifestyle. Losing weight can also help relieve chronic bodily pain and inflammation that lead to anxiety and depression for many. Follow the protocols below to start losing weight and feeling better:

2.1.1. EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Most of us have heard over and over that we need to eat more fruit and vegetables since we were small children, but how many of us are actually doing this? Fruit and vegetables are the perfect snack and meal because they are low in calories and high in fiber.

They are also low in fat. With these attributes, fruits and vegetables are perfect for weight loss success. They are also a source of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients we need to stay healthy.

Stock your house full of healthy fruits and vegetables instead of junk food so you have something healthy to reach for when you are hungry.



Try eating more fruits like cherries, grapes, bananas, plums, apples, and raspberries. Try eating more vegetables like asparagus, bell peppers (these make a great snack when chopped), squash, broccoli, okra, zucchini, cucumber, carrots, and cauliflower. Avoid preparing them by frying them. If you want to bake them, toss them in a small amount of olive oil and add a pinch of salt and pepper.

2.1.2. DRINK MORE WATER

We are made mostly of water. Every cell of our body needs water in order to function the way it should. Water helps to lubricate our joints, helps form saliva and mucus to protect and help digest, keeps the mouth clean, helps filter the kidneys, keeps the digestive system functioning efficiently, boosts the metabolic rate, and increases satiety.



Another way water can help us lose weight is by filling up the stomach. Sometimes, we reach for food when what our body really needs is water. If you find that you are hungry when you are bored, try drinking a glass or two of water instead of reaching for a snack. This helps your brain realize that it wasn't hungry after all.

The amount of water you drink daily varies according to everyone's needs, but a good goal to aim for is eight glasses a day. You may desire more or less than this, but try to drink as much as you can to stay hydrated and healthy, as well as lose weight.

2.1.3. EAT HIGH FIBER FOODS

Foods high in fiber have the ability to make us feel full. This is perfect for those who find that they are hungry all the time. Fiber can be found in healthy foods such as peas, beans, lentils, brown rice, oats, acorn squash, collard greens, artichokes, butternut squash, parsnips, broccoli, kale, spinach, carrots, beet greens, okra Brussels sprouts, Swiss chard, sweet potatoes, asparagus, turnips, eggplant, cabbage, mushrooms, zucchini, cauliflower, tomatoes, leeks, green peppers, and celery. Try adding these to your diet and have at least one of these with every meal.



2.1.4. USE A SMALLER PLATE

Most of us shop for plates that are large and pretty. We don't stop to think about the fact that the food we put on our plates will look like a small amount because of the size of the plate. Opt for smaller plates for your food and you will notice that you eat smaller portions as a result. This helps to lose weight over time.

For some of us, it isn't necessarily *what* we are eating that is causing weight gain, but rather *how much* we are eating. Overeating is a big problem and a real issue with a lot of people struggling to lose weight. Even if the foods you choose are healthy, put them on a small plate when you eat so you don't eat too much.

2.1.5. SKIP THE ALCOHOL AND SUGAR

Consider sugar and alcohol two of your biggest enemies when it comes to losing weight. Sugar is a huge contender. Not only is it highly processed and unhealthy, it contributes to inflammation in the body. It affects us psychologically and many of us are dependent on it without even realizing it.

Some studies show that sugar is more addictive than hard drugs. Alcohol contains high amounts of sugar and other unhealthy ingredients that lead to inflammation and a weakened immune system. Cut these two things out of your diet and you will lose weight much faster. In addition, cutting sugar and alcohol from your diet will help boost your mood and immune system.

2.1.6. MEAL PLANNING WORKS

If you're like most Americans, you go to the store and just shop for whatever looks good. Making a meal plan will go far to help you lose weight and save money in the process. Meal plans give you more incentive to stick to a diet and a healthy lifestyle. They help you take care of one of the hardest parts of losing weight which is figuring out what to eat.



A lot of people plan healthy meals, go shopping for the ingredients, and then prepare meals ahead of time for the week so they don't have to think about what they will eat that week. This is a real game changer for losing weight.

Consider buying little containers to store your meals in for the week after you prepare them. Fill them with lean meats, plenty of vegetables/leafy greens, and fruit.



2.1.7. DON'T STARVE YOURSELF

You may think that going without eating helps you lose weight, but for most people, it has the opposite effect. Starving yourself actually sends a signal to the brain that you are in some sort of distress. The body responds by storing up fat more so you can survive the famine.

This is why so many people who skip meals struggle with weight loss. They are actually training their body to save fat rather than get rid of it. In addition, starvation only lasts so long before most people get really hungry and overeat. Eat three small, healthy meals daily and you will find that you'll lose weight faster without going hungry.

2.1.8. AVOID PROCESSED AND FRIED FOODS

Processed foods contain an array of chemicals that harm the body. They can hinder your ability to lose weight and also trigger more anxiety and depression. Fried foods contain a high amount of fat due to the oils in the food. Oils like canola oil, corn oil, and vegetable oil are extremely unhealthy and linked to heart disease, cancer, and obesity. If you want to use oil with your food, use a small amount of olive oil to toss your food in before baking or use to flavor a salad. Olive oil is full of omega 3 fatty acids and antioxidants that help protect your body rather than harming it like other oils. Skip frying and bake, sauté, or grill your foods instead. Avoid processed meats and



opt for fresh lean meat like salmon, mackerel, chicken, turkey, and grass fed beef. Keep your meat servings under four ounces per meal.

2.2. EXERCISE

Exercise, along with a healthy diet, is one of the best ways to lose weight in a healthy manner. If you dislike exercise, keep in mind that it doesn't have to be vigorous and unpleasant. You can exercise in a variety of ways to suit your needs and wishes. If you have trouble with cardio or weight training, start exercising in a way that you can handle, such as yoga or taking a daily walk.

As long as you are moving each day, you are making strides to being healthier. Exercise isn't just a great way to lose weight; there are many other benefits to daily movement. For starters, daily exercise has been shown to reduce anxiety and depression by itself. It also helps reduce your risk of certain diseases and cancers in the future.

The number one cause of death in the United States is heart disease and this is likely due to a sedentary lifestyle and poor diet. You can do something to protect your heart and extend your life span by exercising daily. Below are some great exercises you can do to stay healthy and reduce anxiety and depression:

2.2.1. DANCING

Most people love dancing and it is a great form of exercise as well. Dancing just seems to make a person feel better, especially if they suffer from anxiety or depression. Dancing is actually a form of aerobic exercise, although it can be so fun you may not even notice.

Play some of your favorite songs and dance for twenty minutes each day. You may be surprised how great it makes you feel both physically and emotionally. Plus, you can dance fast or slow, depending on how you feel and the songs you play. You can even dance with a partner if you want. Check in your area to see if there are any dance classes you can take to learn new dance styles and moves you have always wanted to try.

2.2.2. RUNNING

People who love to run say it helps them clear their mind and reduces stress. This is why running is so popular for treating anxiety and depression. It is a great way to get exercise and gets the blood

and heart pumping. There are a lot of fun things you can do if you like to run. You can enter marathons and 5K runs to run with others who enjoy this form of exercise. Running allows you to take time for yourself each day to de-stress and unwind. Try to run for 30 minutes daily for best results.

2.2.3. YOGA

Yoga is one of the best exercises for anxiety and depression because it helps to calm the body and mind. Plus, you can pick from a variety of poses based on your ability. It combines working out with controlled breathing to help you unwind.

Yoga exercises help improve your mental and physical health, which makes it perfect for managing anxiety and depression. You can do yoga on your own (there are many videos you can follow online) or you can do yoga in a group setting. Many places offer yoga classes, so there is likely one in your area.



2.2.4. HIKING

Not only can hiking be a great way to exercise and stay healthy, it is a great way to connect with nature, which also reduces stress and depression. Instead of exercising in a room with nothing to look at, hiking allows you to enjoy the beauty of nature and take in the interesting sights around you. Hiking gives you time to yourself to get away from the craziness of life and just enjoy the quiet peace of nature.

Hiking has been shown to increase blood flow to the brain and muscles, as well as release endorphins that make you feel great. An added bonus is being out in the sunlight, which also provides the body with vitamin D to stay healthy and fight viruses. Try to get outside and hike in nature as much as you

can to improve your overall health and wellbeing.

2.2.5. TAKE WALKS

If running isn't your thing, you can always take walks to get some exercise and fresh air. Time in nature is crucial to physical, emotional, and mental health, so it makes perfect sense that walking would be a great way to relieve anxiety and depression, while also helping you get the exercise you need.

Check out your area for good trails and places you can go to get in a good walk. Set a goal to get in at least ten thousand steps each day. If possible, get a fitness tracker so you can better keep track of these goals.

2.2.6. GO SWIMMING

Swimming is one of the most effective ways to exercise and relieve anxiety at the same time. It is one of the most underrated forms of exercise but extremely beneficial in so many ways. Your body uses so many more muscles when you swim. Not only this, but swimming forces the body to breathe deeply, which is invaluable for overall health.

While some forms of exercise take a toll on your physical health, such as the knees, swimming actually protects the knees and other joints from damage. It is a great way to cool off in the summer months when the heat is oppressive. Consider adding swimming to your daily exercise routine to help boost your physical and mental health.

2.2.7. STRENGTH TRAINING

Some people find that lifting weights helps release anger or other aggression they are holding below the surface. If you are struggling with anxiety or depression triggered by unresolved trauma or anger, strength training with weights may be what you need to release whatever is holding you down while also becoming healthier and stronger.

The types of exercise listed above are especially helpful for those struggling with anxiety and depression because they work to help release feelings held back, allow for some time to focus on yourself, and help to keep your body strong. Over time, you may find that you lose weight as a result of sticking with your exercise goals, which will further help you feel better on your journey.

to optimal health and wellbeing. Feel free to choose one type of exercise that best fits your needs or a combination of different types of exercise to give yourself a change of scenery each day.

2.3. LIGHT THERAPY AND HOW TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

It has been mentioned that more people experience depression during the winter months due to the lack of sunlight. It can be hard going from long, sunny days to short, dark days once winter sets in. If you happen to be one of these people, you can try light therapy to help you feel better during the darker months.

Light therapy involves using a light box in the morning that simulates the rising sun. Some people have light boxes that require them to stare into the light for a few minutes and other people have light boxes that simulate the rising sun in their bedroom as they sleep in the morning to wake them naturally and help boost their mood.

Another option for those with Seasonal Affective Disorder is to take a daily supplement of St. John's wort tincture, which can help to naturally boost the mood for those with mild to moderate depression and Seasonal Affective Disorder. Take two droppers full up to three times daily as needed.

In addition to light therapy and St. John's wort, taking time to connect with nature goes a long way to helping cure anxiety and depression. We are meant to be in nature as much as possible-it is ingrained in each of us. When we constantly surround ourselves with a man-made environment, it can take a toll on our mental health. Below are ways you can connect with nature. Try to make a goal to connect with nature each day and spend at least 20 minutes in nature:

2.3.1. LIE IN THE GRASS

There is a theory called "grounding" that states we can better connect to the earth's electromagnetic field when we walk barefoot everywhere. Supporters of this concept walk barefoot and claim that they feel better both mentally and physically as a result.

If you want to try grounding yourself, you don't have to walk barefoot everywhere you go, you can also lie in the grass for a while. This simple act helps ground you with the earth and allows you to slow down and decompress a while in nature. Take this time to practice deep breathing

exercises and meditation.

2.3.2. KEEP A COMPASS WITH YOU

The motivation behind this is to help you become more aware of where you are in space, even if you aren't always in nature. What position are you facing at this moment? Do you know whether you are facing north, south, east, or west? A compass helps you understand that you are connected to the earth in many ways.

2.3.3. EXERCISE OUTSIDE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

There are so many exercises that can be performed outdoors, and you should make it a point to be outdoors for exercise whenever possible. Whether it is yoga, swimming, running, walking, or even weight lifting, it is entirely possible to do this outdoors and soak up the sunlight and fresh air while doing so.

If you live in a climate that doesn't allow this in the winter months, consider bundling up for a run or walk instead of using a treadmill. As the old saying goes, "There is no inappropriate weather, just inappropriate clothing."

2.3.4. BE NEAR WATER

There is definitely something about water that brings out the best feelings in all of us. It may be the ultimate connection to nature. There are all kinds of things you can do in water or next to water.

Whether you want to sit on the shores of a lake and meditate or take a daily swim during the summer months, you should make it a point to be near water when you can. You can also look into water activities such as kayaking, surfing, wakeboarding, or canoeing

2.3.5. WATCH THE SUNRISE AND SUNSET

Sunlight plays a significant role with our moods and how we feel each day. If you want to test this theory, try making it a point to watch the sunrise and sunset each day for a week. Watching the sunrise in the morning sends signals to your brain to wake up and get going. It may even help you break your addiction to coffee.

Watching the sunset in the evening sends signals to your brain that it is time to prepare for bed. You may find that you sleep much better and wake more refreshed after a while of doing this. As

a result, you will feel better in many ways and your anxiety and depression will lessen tremendously.

2.4. NATURAL REMEDIES

Natural remedies can be perfect to use in conjunction with other protocols in this book for anxiety and depression. They can further help to boost the mood, balance hormones, regulate the thyroid, and manage how your body responds to stress so you can feel better faster.

Below are remedies for different anxiety and depression triggers. Choose one that best fits your needs to use along with the other protocols in the book:

2.4.1. REMEDIES FOR HORMONAL BALANCE

Hormones can play a significant role when it comes to our moods. This is why those going through hormonal issues often complain of “mood swings” and other related issues. If you suspect hormones are to blame for your anxiety and depression, the first step is getting those balanced. Below are remedies that can bring balance to hormones and regulate the mood:

- **Vitex for Balance**

Vitex (*Vitex agnus-castus*), or chaste tree berry, is the most effective natural remedy for hormonal balance of any kind. Whether the issue is with estrogen, progesterone, or prolactin, vitex can manage the issue and restore balance to hormones in need of stability. Vitex is an adaptogen, a class of herb that is known for its ability to detect an issue in the body and restore equilibrium where it is needed. This is why it works so well for people with all kinds of hormonal issues.



You can take vitex in capsule or tincture form, whatever best fits your needs. For tinctures, start with two droppers full up to three times daily. For capsules, start with three capsules daily with meals. It can take a few weeks before you notice the effects of this amazing plant, but stick with it to see results and finally feel better.

- **Black Cohosh for Menopause**

If menopause has your hormones out of whack, you may find that black cohosh (*Actaea racemosa* or *Cimicifuga racemosa*) helps with the mood swings, irritability, and increased anxiety that tend to affect those going through this life change.

This plant can be quite rare, so only purchase from ethical sources or consider growing your own. Take one dropper full of black cohosh tincture up to twice daily for hormonal issues related to menopause.

You may also notice a decrease in night sweats and other unpleasant menopausal symptoms after taking it a while.



2.4.2. REMEDIES FOR THYROID HEALTH

When the thyroid isn't functioning properly, it is not uncommon for people to experience depression and other related issues. If you suspect that your thyroid is to blame for your anxiety or depression, the remedies below might help. Make sure to see a doctor to run a full panel to better pinpoint the exact issue with your thyroid before taking any remedies:

- **Sea moss for natural iodine**

Sea moss (*Chondrus crispus*) is a powerful and mineral-dense plant that also happens to be a natural source of iodine. The thyroid relies on iodine to function and many people with thyroid issues are deficient in this essential mineral. Unlike some other substances, the body cannot make its own iodine, so it must rely on the foods we eat to get the iodine it needs for the thyroid to function properly.

If you are in need of natural iodine supplementation, try consuming two tablespoons of sea moss gel per day in a smoothie or health drink. You can make sea moss gel by washing and soaking the sea moss you harvest or purchase overnight. The next day, rinse this off and



place it in a blender. Add a small amount of water and blend this until it reaches a gel-like consistency. Add water as needed until your sea moss gel is not too thick and not too runny. Store it in a jar in the refrigerator where it should last one month.

- **Ashwagandha for thyroid balance**

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is a great herb for thyroid health because it is an adaptogen. Adaptogens are perfect for restoring balance in the body as needed depending on the issue.

Ashwagandha can help calm the body's response to stress, boost immunity, combat inflammation, increase energy levels, and balance hormones as well. It is known for its effect on the thyroid in particular where it helps to normalize thyroid function for those with subclinical hypothyroidism. Make a tincture with the chopped roots and take two droppers full up to twice daily with meals.



2.4.3. REMEDIES FOR WEIGHT LOSS

If you need some extra help with weight loss, there may be natural remedies you can try to help suppress appetite while also giving you that extra boost you need to get through the day.

Below are two effective remedies for those seeking assistance for weight loss. When combined with a healthy diet and exercise, they may be just what you need for shedding those last few pounds:

- **Saffron for Curbing Appetite**

Saffron (*Crocus sativus*) is a beautiful red spice revered for its unique flavor. While many people know it for its flavoring abilities, saffron also boasts some serious weight loss claims. It is thought to help people lose weight in several ways. First, it helps to curb appetite. If you struggle with being hungry all the time, saffron can help you kick the cravings. Second, it helps stop obesity mediated inflammation.



Third, it may also help with other metabolic diseases. It is an aphrodisiac, so it may increase sex drive, which is great for those who have a lower libido due to health issues. You can make a tincture with saffron and take one dropper full up to three times daily for its weight loss benefits.

- **Cayenne and Ginger**

Both cayenne (*Capsicum annuum*) and ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) are linked to weight loss. Cayenne can help boost the metabolism, reduce hunger, and promote a feeling of fullness.

Ginger may increase the metabolism and fat burning abilities of the body, while also decreasing the appetite and fat absorption. Together, they make the perfect blend to help the body burn fat and calories.

Fill a sterile glass jar with one part chopped ginger root and one part chopped cayenne peppers (fresh or dried). Completely cover the plant material in at least 80 proof alcohol and allow this to infuse for four to six weeks in a cool, dark place. Strain out the liquid when it is ready and bottle it in a dropper bottle. Take one to two droppers full thirty minutes to one hour before meals.



- **Fenugreek for Decreasing Fat Intake**

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*) is a pleasant-smelling herb that can work to decrease appetite and fat intake. It is thought to do this by reducing hunger and thus fat and calorie intake. Some studies showed that it reduced fat intake by seventeen percent, which over time could lead to significant weight loss.

It can be tinctured by filling a jar with the chopped plant and then covering this in alcohol to infuse for four to six weeks. Strain this out and put the liquid in a dropper bottle when it is ready. Take two droppers full about thirty minutes before each meal.



2.4.4. REMEDIES FOR MANAGING STRESS

Allowing stress to fester in your life can eventually take its toll on your physical and mental health. The body can only handle chronic stress for so long before it begins to show signs of distress. Stress is definitely a trigger for anxiety and depression, but it also triggers physical problems that manifest in potentially dangerous ways.

For example, stress can directly impact the cardiovascular system and cause high blood pressure and a weakened heart. It can also weaken the immune system, setting you up for issues when fighting pathogens. It is important to manage stress as soon as you feel you are struggling.

The remedies below can help your body cope with stress better and calm the nerves as well.

- **Adaptogens for Stress**

Your body could use help adapting to stress. Adaptogens help your body better respond to stress in a way that doesn't cause destruction physically and mentally. Some great adaptogens for stress include American ginseng, reishi, cordyceps, ashwagandha, licorice root, and holy basil.

Try taking one of these adaptogens daily to help manage stress. You can also try a natural stress remedy below to use along with your daily adaptogen:

- **Skullcap and Lemon Balm Tea**

Skullcap (*Scutellaria*) used to go by the nickname, “mad dog” because it was given to people who were “mad.” It has strong sedative and nervine properties and can help take the edge off if you find that stress is causing you to lash out at others, not be yourself, or causing severe frustration and mood changes.

Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) pairs perfectly with skullcap and is also a gentle nervine herb. It can calm frazzled nerves and bring peace and tranquility to a tumultuous mind.

Infuse one teaspoon of each herb in a cup of hot water for fifteen minutes and enjoy this tea up to three times daily (or as needed) to manage the effects of stress in your life.



- **Lavender and Bergamot Aromatherapy Inhaler**

Lavender (*Lavandula*) is famous for its ability to bring calm and peace, and when paired with bergamot, it creates the perfect combination for targeting stress and anxiety.

Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*) is known for helping to promote feelings of optimism and happiness. If you need something quick and portable to have on hand throughout the day for stress and anxiety management, this is the perfect remedy.



You can use an aromatherapy inhaler, which is a device that has a wick inside for you to add essential oils to and breathe as needed or you can put the oils on a cotton ball and store this inside a bag to smell throughout the day. Whichever route you choose, simply drop two drops of lavender and two drops of bergamot essential oil on the cotton wick or cotton ball and take a few deep breaths of this as need when you need to take time out for anxiety management.

The act of breathing in the essential oil aroma is something that has been used as a healing remedy for centuries. This is where the very term “aromatherapy” comes from. Scent from the oils affects the olfactory system and in turn affects the neurological system when the oils are inhaled. This has a positive effect on mood, stress, anxiety, and overall behavior.

- **Valerian for Anxiety**

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) root is a Central Nervous System (CNS) depressant. If you find that your nerves feel on edge a lot, valerian root may help to calm the nerves and keep you feeling stabilized.

It is especially helpful for those suffering from anxiety and depression because it also helps bring restful sleep to those suffering from insomnia due to lying awake overthinking things. This is typical behavior for some people suffering from severe anxiety and stress and the lack of sleep it brings



can harm the body in many ways.

Try making valerian root tea for daily use. It is perfect for helping reduce anxiety in the daytime but not making you really tired. For a stronger valerian remedy at night before bed, you can take two droppers full of valerian root tincture to promote a good night's sleep.

- **Passionflower for Anxiety**

Not only is passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*) one of the most beautiful flowers in the world, it boasts medicinal properties for easing anxiety and stress. It is a gentle nervine remedy that can be used for daily management of stress and anxiety.

Make a tea for daily use by infusing one to two teaspoons of passionflower into one cup of hot water and drinking one to two cups as needed. For evenings, make a tincture to take to help you sleep better and settle down for the evening. Take two droppers full about thirty minutes before bedtime.



2.4.5. REMEDIES FOR GRIEF AND TRAUMA

If grief and trauma have triggered anxiety or depression, you can help manage this in several ways. First, it helps to talk to someone so you can get those feelings out, as opposed to being bottled up which is unhealthy.

Second, it helps to shift your focus to the blessings you still have in your life rather than what was lost. Make a list if you have to so you can see this physically manifest. In addition to these suggestions, there are natural remedies you can use that have been known to help with grief and trauma:

- **The Tree of Happiness for Grief**

The Chinese call the mimosa tree (*Albizia julibrissin*) the “tree of happiness” because of its long history of use for treating the effects of grief and trauma. Mimosa has long been a remedy for emotional trauma in Chinese Traditional Medicine. While the beautiful tree with its fluffy pink flowers originates in Asia, it has since spread all over the world and grows in nearly all regions of North America today. It is invasive in some southern and Midwestern regions of the United States.

The inner bark and flowers can be tinctured and taken for grief management. Fill a jar with the flowers and bark and then completely cover this with at least 80 proof alcohol. Allow this to infuse for four to six weeks and then strain it out.

Bottle the liquid in a dropper bottle and take two droppers full up to four times daily as needed to help with grief and trauma. Mimosa tincture can help you feel more positive and give you a better outlook in the face of grief and sadness.



• St. John's Wort

No depression protocol would be complete without suggesting St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). St. John's wort has been studied for its ability to increase the chemicals in the brain responsible for happiness and a positive mood.

It has been used for both anxiety and depression, ranging from mild to moderate depression and even Seasonal Affective Disorder. It can also be taken during times of grief and sadness to help boost feelings of contentment.



Tincture the fresh flowers that bloom in the summer months for best results. The flowers have an active compound called hypericin that stains the tincture a dark magenta color. Take two droppers full of this red tincture up to three times daily.

• Linden for Healing from Grief

Linden (*Tilia americana*) is thought to be an effective heart tonic and nervine. It is said that grief takes a toll on the heart and cardiovascular system, so linden blossom can help protect while also helping to comfort during times of grief and loss. It is gentle enough to be safe for children and adults alike. It can be infused in hot water to make tea or tinctured.

Drink one to three cups of linden blossom tea daily for grief and heartache or take two droppers full of linden blossom tincture as needed for grief. Linden flowers can be easily collected in the

spring when their fragrant blossoms take over trees and make them more noticeable.

2.5. ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES

If unhealthy relationships are making you stressed, anxious, or depressed, it is time to set boundaries. It doesn't matter who is causing the issue in your life, it could be a friend, family member, or partner. Sometimes it is even children who need the boundaries. In this section, you will learn how to establish healthy boundaries so you can feel more in control of your life.

How do you know whether or not you have strong or loose boundaries with others? There are a few ways you can determine your current boundary style. Some people have more rigid boundaries. These people tend to be detached, keep others at a distance, have very few close relationships, and even avoid close relationships. If you are a person with rigid boundaries, you may need to work on opening up more and developing more meaningful and intimate relationships.

Some people are at the other end of the spectrum and tend to have loose boundaries. These people often find it hard to say "no" to others, overshare personal information too much, get too involved with other's problems, and seek to please others because they fear rejection. As with anything in life, there is a healthy middle ground between rigid and loose boundaries. The goal is to establish boundaries that allow you to be in control when it comes to potentially toxic relationships with others.

The goal is to have healthy boundaries in place. A person with healthy boundaries shares personal information appropriately, understands the personal needs and wants of others and knows how to communicate effectively, values their opinions, and accepts when they are told "no." Begin your quest to set boundaries by first determining what you are willing to put up with and what you will not tolerate. When you know this, you can set boundaries to help you know the next step to take.

There are many different types of boundaries you need to put in place. Some of these include physical boundaries, sexual boundaries, intellectual boundaries, emotional boundaries, and even financial boundaries. Physical boundaries might include your personal space, privacy, and body. Sexual boundaries might include your expectations with intimacy or sexual comments and touches you find uncomfortable. Intellectual boundaries include your thoughts and beliefs. When someone dismisses the thoughts or beliefs you value, this is a sign that someone isn't respecting your intellectual boundaries.

Emotional boundaries refer to a person's feelings concerning what they are comfortable sharing.

Some people aren't comfortable sharing their feelings but require time to get comfortable and may share more and more gradually over time. Financial boundaries refer to how you spend money. Do you save money or spend it on the latest gadgets? This also comes into play when others ask to borrow money from you. You need to know ahead of time what your boundaries are when it comes to loaning money.

You don't have to sit down in one day and come up with a list of healthy boundaries you want to enforce in your life. Start small. Choose one thing to deal with at a time and try to come up with boundaries ahead of time for this particular aspect of your life. When it comes to boundaries, it is important to be consistent when you are confronted with situations where you must enforce your boundary. Never let things slide. Determine ahead of time what you will do when someone oversteps your boundaries and stick with this.

Another aspect of healthy boundaries is respecting the boundaries of others. Take no for an answer, respect other's privacy, and don't disrespect the beliefs and values of others just because they don't align with yours.

2.6. HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

Have you ever noticed that your mood changes when you haven't had a decent night's sleep? New moms find this out the hard way when they go from interrupted sleep to endless nights of constant sleep interruptions with a new baby. A lack of sleep directly impacts mood and you may find yourself being short-tempered, emotional, or depressed as a result of unhealthy sleep patterns.

Over time, a lack of sleep can lead to worsened anxiety and depression. More and more people face issues with getting to sleep and staying asleep, but here are solutions that can help you get a better night's sleep so you can feel refreshed, fortified, and ready to take on the day.

In turn, your body will thank you with a better mood and strengthened immune system:

2.6.1. BEDTIME ROUTINE

Establishing a bedtime routine is one of the best ways to ensure you get a better night's sleep. A bedtime routine can look different for each individual, but may consist of winding down a few hours before bed by turning off screens (this includes your phone), turning down the lights a little, taking a warm bath, having a cup of herbal tea, reading a book, or meditation. These things help the brain send signals to the rest of the body that it is nearing time to go to sleep.

One of the most important things you can do to help your brain send signals that it is time for bed is to turn off screens at least one hour before you plan on going to sleep. Blue light from screens is notorious for sending the wrong signals to the brain and body that essentially tell it to stay awake and alert. If possible, set up your phone to go into “sleep mode” at a certain time each night so it isn’t constantly going off and waking you up. You can set it to only ring for certain people if you are concerned you may miss an emergency, etc. It may be tempting to do work in the evenings on your laptop or computer while lying in bed, but resist the temptation to do this. Keep your office separate from your bedroom. Make your bedroom a place for sleep and peace.

A warm bath is great for helping the body to find peace and tranquility as well. Consider doing this nightly before bed if you have trouble falling asleep. In addition, research has shown that watching the sunset sends signals to the brain that bedtime is approaching as well. Take a few moments to watch the sunset and practice deep breathing as you do this for added relaxation and peace. Below are some effective herbal remedies for those who need a little extra help falling asleep. They make the perfect herbal tea to drink during your nightly bedtime routine.

2.6.2. CALIFORNIA POPPY

California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) is great for helping promote feelings of calm and serenity. It is a gentle nervine herb that is safe for all ages. Try infusing one to two teaspoons of California poppy into one cup of hot water for ten to fifteen minutes before enjoying.

Drink one to two cups of this around one hour before bed for best results. If you like tea with sugar, try skipping the sugar with this particular tea. Sugar is a stimulant and can be counterproductive to helping you fall asleep.

An added bonus for this plant is its ability to calm the nerves and possibly help combat anxiety for those who deal with stress and anxiety in addition to insomnia.



2.6.3. VALERIAN

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) root is perhaps the most potent of all the sleep aid herbs. This Central Nervous System depressant does a great job at helping your body and mind shut down

when it is time to go to sleep. If you have issues falling asleep because you are overstimulated, overexcited, or overthinking before bed, this may be the perfect herbal remedy for you.

Infuse two teaspoons of the chopped roots in one cup of hot water for fifteen minutes before consuming. Avoid adding raw honey or any kind of sugar. Enjoy one to two cups of this tea around one hour before bedtime. Do not use valerian root before driving or operating any heavy machinery, as it can slow reaction time for some people.

2.6.4. BEDTIME AROMATHERAPY

It helps immensely if you can diffuse certain essential oils at bedtime. Add five to eight drops of the essential oil to an ultrasonic diffuser filled with water and turn this on one hour to thirty minutes before bedtime.

Stay in the room and read a book or meditate/practice deep breathing as you enjoy the aromatherapy. Some great essential oils to help the mind and body relax and wind down include vetiver, patchouli, frankincense, valerian root, lavender, chamomile, and clary sage. You can also choose to combine these in any way that works best for your needs. Just use around three drops of each oil instead of five to eight drops for one oil.



3. SELF-CARE TIPS AND STRATEGIES TO AVOID OVERWORKING

Self-care is simply taking time for yourself to focus on your needs. It can be easy to get caught up in work, whether it is your job or the work you need to do at home. We can get so caught up with these things that we neglect ourselves and pay the price as a result. Failure to take time for your needs can lead to heightened stress, anxiety, and depression.



Make it a point to take time out for yourself each day and you may be surprised how much better you feel. You may notice you have less stress, a better mood, and a more optimistic outlook on life. Below are some tips to help you start focusing on yourself and how to care for your needs:

3.1. KEEP YOUR OFFICE SEPARATE

Do you have a long list of to-dos? If you are overwhelmed by all the things you need to do, make a list, but prioritize from the most important to the least important. Get all the big things finished first so you don't have as much to fret over. Don't go from one thing to the next, but instead try to stick with the task at hand and finish that before moving on to something else.

3.2. FIND A HOBBY

Is there anything you have been wanting to learn how to do? Perhaps you want to learn a new language or how to play an instrument? Perhaps there is a craft you have been wanting to learn how to make?

Consider taking up a hobby that interests you so you can do this when you need time to relax and be creative. Some fun hobbies include making things with resin, sewing, knitting, crocheting, or candle making. Not only can learning a new hobby be incredibly stress relieving, it can be very rewarding.

3.3. PAMPER YOURSELF

You deserve it! When is the last time you had a pedicure, manicure, facial, or a massage? When is the last time you had your hair done professionally? Set up time to do these things weekly. You will feel better about yourself and in turn, feel less anxious and stressed.



3.4. TRY ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture has been shown to relieve stress considerably for some people. This ancient practice is a cornerstone of Traditional Chinese Medicine and has been used for centuries to help people heal in various ways. Book an appointment with a licensed acupuncturist in your area.

3.5. MAKE A SCHEDULE

Do you let time get away from you and before you know it, it is late and you are still in the office? Make a schedule and stick to it. Designate time to work, time for self-care, time for exercise, and time for social activities. Create a schedule that accommodates your needs and try to be consistent with it. Use a daily planner or your phone. This can also help you make time to do other things you need to do so you don't feel overwhelmed. Make the most of your time so you can accomplish your goals each day.

3.6. PRIORITIZE

Do you have a long list of to-dos? If you are overwhelmed by all the things you need to do, make a list, but prioritize from the most important to the least important. Get all the big things finished first so you don't have as much to fret over. Don't go from one thing to the next, but instead try to stick with the task at hand and finish that before moving on to something else.

3.7. GET A PET

If you have the time and the room, consider getting a pet! This is a big undertaking, but having a pet has been shown to help reduce anxiety and depression.

Hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and other institutions are letting people bring in trained animals for patients to spend time with because this has been shown to uplift, brighten the mood, and promote feelings of positivity and happiness.

4. FINAL THOUGHTS ON ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION PROTOCOL

You don't have to live each day with anxiety and depression. You can start doing something about it today by following the protocols in this book.

You may not notice a change overnight, but over time, you may notice that you feel less stress and have a better outlook on life if you adhere to the protocols.

A combination of daily exercise, a healthy diet, herbal remedies, and self-care may be just what you need for a brighter tomorrow.