

# Coping with Sensory Overload

For many people, overstimulation is a direct path to anxiety.

Unfortunately, our current world is designed to stimulate us from the moment we wake until we finally go to sleep. Noise, smells, sights, sounds, social gatherings, or even just being out in public can provoke anxiety. This sensory overload activates the body's stress response, which can lead to anxious thoughts and uncomfortable physical reactions, such as rapid heartbeat, quick, shallow breathing, and, in worst cases, panic.

While the natural tendency to absorb everything all the time has many challenges, we can tap into the strength of our sensitivity with the right tools and identify what causes anxiety. Here is how you can address and cope with sensory overload.

## SELF-CARE

- Step away and take a moment to calm yourself.
- Laugh to relieve tension and improve mood and physical health.
- Build a restful sleep schedule for essential emotional and physical maintenance.
- Seek nature to help you recharge and ground yourself.

## MINDFULNESS

- Deep breathing and stretching produce a natural calming effect.
- Meditation helps by blocking out distractions.
- Practice gratitude by journaling. You can start by jotting down three things you are grateful for, or directly sharing your appreciation with others.

## BALANCE

- Take a moment to tune into your thoughts and feelings.
- Write down positive replacements for feelings you face during triggering situations.
- Focus on the here and now to slow down, reduce anxiety, and worry.
- Limit the number of overstimulating activities that trigger overwhelm



Having trouble processing all the sensations your brain is experiencing?



Contact your EAP for guidance on developing coping strategies for a less overstimulated lifestyle.



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