

MYTH VS REALITY

MYTH

Snap a rubber band on your wrist every time you have a bad thought

If a panic attack gets too bad, you can pass out or lose control.

If you have an anxiety disorder, it is important to avoid stress and situations that make you feel “stressed.”

Always carry a paper bag in case you hyperventilate.

The causes of anxiety disorders are usually rooted in childhood, so effective therapy must focus on that time period.

REALITY

Studies show that suppressing your thoughts makes them stronger and more frequent. Think of it this way: The thoughts you resist persist.

It's unlikely you will faint, which is caused by a sudden drop in blood pressure. During a panic attack your blood pressure does not fall; it actually rises slightly.

Treating yourself as if you are fragile and avoiding risk leads to feeling demoralized. Avoiding anxiety tends to reinforce it. You can be anxious and still do whatever you have to do.

Paper bags can serve as safety crutches that keep you anxious about being anxious. Hyperventilation, while uncomfortable, is not dangerous.

Research shows that effective treatment focuses on the here and now, including new skills to manage thoughts, emotions, discomforts, and behavior.

SSRI and SNRI antidepressants