



## Are you experiencing a panic attack?

The world we live in today has not experienced a situation equivalent to this for over a hundred years. The last time a pandemic swept the world with full force, most of us were not even born, leaving us without clues on how to **cope** and recover from its emotional impacts. Our fast-paced lives suddenly came to a sudden stop, barring us from many aspects of life that we took for granted before. COVID 19 has forever changed the world we live in, resulting in both short term and long adjustments

Along with focusing on physical health (and **distancing**), we also have to pay attention to our mental health. It will not be out of the ordinary to feel anxiety, fear, hopelessness or even panic. Our focus for this article is on panic or panic attacks.

### What is a panic attack?

A panic attack can come without an apparent stressor, and there is no way to predict its occurrence, thus leaving a person suffering in constant fear of re-experiencing another one. During a panic attack, an individual may feel paralyzing terror, fear or dread. Physical symptoms include, but are not limited to, nausea, chest pain, dizziness, abnormal cramping, shortness of breath, to name a few. Some people might even feel like they are experiencing a heart attack.

### What are the symptoms of a panic attack?

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- nausea
- chest pain
- dizziness
- sweating profusely
- sweaty palms
- abnormal cramping
- shortness of breath
- sense of impending doom or danger
- fear of loss of control
- pounding heart rate
- trembling or shaking
- tightness in the throat
- chills
- hot flashes
- headache
- numbness or tingling sensation
- feeling of detachment or experiencing the situation as a third person

*According to **Psych guide**, “When the mind catastrophically misinterprets these feelings, it can activate the brain’s survival reflexes. The situation then spirals, so that the uncomfortable physiological sensations fuel yet more alarm and fear. The entire episode can last anywhere from a few minutes to more than an hour (although that’s rare). Usually, the panic reaches its crescendo within 10 minutes before subsiding.”*

#### **Tips to manage panic attacks:**

- first, understand the signs of a panic attack
- practice **mindfulness meditation** and yoga
- practice focused deep breathing
- take a break from media, whether it is social or the news and entertainment.
- maintain a **journal**
- focus on what you can control and take away your mind from the things that are not under your control
- try to practice gratitude
- remember that panic attacks does not define us
- practice **self-care**
- seek professional help when necessary

It is useful to remember that we are all in this together and that it is okay to feel negative emotions at times. We should always remind ourselves to make

sure to not only look after our physical health but also our **mental** and emotional health.

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By Dr Gavril Hercz | July 30th, 2020 | Mental Health | 0 Comments

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