

How to Earn Money when You Have Social Anxiety

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It can be incredibly difficult to make money when you have social anxiety. The stress of interviewing can make it difficult to get a job, and anxiety can make it difficult to keep jobs — particularly ones requiring lots of interaction or multitasking. However, people with social anxiety can have amazingly productive careers; think of Bill Gates, Albert Einstein, J.K. Rowling, or Warren Buffett. To get the most out of your career, you'll want to work on coping with your anxiety, choose the right type of job, and learn how to present yourself in a way that impresses potential employers.

Part 1 of 3: Choosing a Job that is Anxiety-Friendly



- ☒ Low stress levels
- ☒ Low noise levels
- ☒ Few interruptions
- ☒ Limited interaction with other people
- ☒ Few group projects

wikiHow

1 Know what to look for in a job. If you have social anxiety, getting a job that avoids people altogether is not the best idea, as this will isolate you and exacerbate your fears. Instead, you'll want to find a job that puts you in touch with people on a daily basis without over-taxing you. Look for jobs with:^[1]

- Low stress levels — Avoid intense, high-pressure environments that will feed your anxiety.
- Low noise levels — Loud noises trigger anxiety in many people.
- Few interruptions — Too much multi-tasking is another common anxiety trigger. Look for jobs that allow you to focus on one task at a time.
- Limited interaction with other people — While you don't want a job where you're interacting all the time (like a cashier or call-center operator), you also don't want a job where you are isolated. Look for jobs that stress one-on-one interaction.
- Few group projects — Group projects not only force interaction, they also increase uncertainty, another source of anxiety.^[2]



2 Look for jobs with a great deal of independence. Writing or computer programming jobs are natural fits for anxious people. However, make sure you still have some interaction with people on a daily basis, or these jobs can make your fears worse. Some good low-interaction jobs that still require some interaction include:

- Lab analyst
- Actuary / accountant
- Financial analyst
- Construction inspector
- Graphic designer
- Website creator
- Cleaning offices



3 Find jobs that involve one-on-one interaction. Most people with social anxiety find it easier to handle interactions if they are with one person at a time, with no time pressure. Some jobs that favor one-on-one, uninterrupted interaction include:^[3]

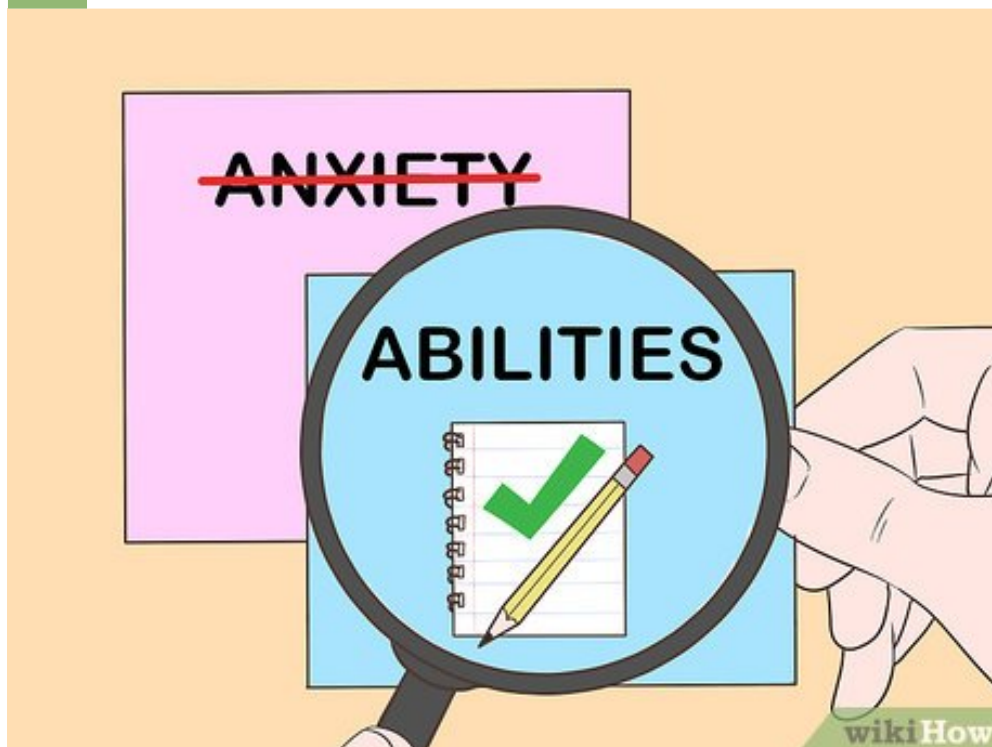
- Tutoring
- Counseling
- Financial advisor
- Electrician, plumber, brick mason, etc.
- Nanny or caregiver



4 Look for jobs focused on children, animals, or nature. Childcare might seem stressful, but many people with social anxiety find it much easier to be around children. Similarly, working with animals (vet or shelter), or with nature (landscaper, nursery, environmental scientist, ranger) can be soothing for people with social anxiety.[4]

Part
2

Part 2 of 3: Getting a Job



1 Focus on your abilities, not your anxiety. The key in getting a job is to focus on what you have to offer. Remember: applying for a job is not a one-way street. You need to convince them that you are good candidate for the job, but they also need to convince you that the job is right for you.



2 Do not feel compelled to mention your social anxiety. Your cover letter, resume, and interviews are for displaying your abilities. There is no need to mention or apologize for your anxiety in them. Remember: shy, quiet people are generally considered to be more trustworthy, so your reticence can actually serve you well in an interview.^[5] However, you might want to discuss your anxiety if:

- You are applying for a job at a workplace that is known to welcome people with disabilities and encourage a diverse workforce. Being open with your employer can make your relationship with them much easier.
- You believe the employer will notice your anxiety and have questions. If so, acknowledge your anxiety and turn it into a positive. For example: "I am a bit nervous today, but I like to push myself to perform even when I am nervous. It's a great way to grow and improve."^[6]
- You believe you will need accommodations, such as a less distracting office space.^[7] (Your employer cannot charge you or pay you less salary for reasonable accommodations.)^[8] To benefit from the Americans with Disabilities Act, you must disclose your disability and your required accommodations to your employer.^[9]



3 Prepare for interviews. The best antidote to being anxious during an interview is making sure you are totally prepared. Then, when negative thoughts arise — *I'm so anxious... I'm going to blow this* — stop and remind yourself that you are well prepared.^[10]

- Be ready to address gaps in your resume — e.g., "Yes, I had a number of part time jobs until I realized the need to improve my skills, so I have undertaken additional training." You can also discuss the educational steps you took between jobs.
- Be ready to answer common questions: What is your biggest weakness? Where do you see yourself in five years? What interests you about this opening? Why did you/are you leaving your last/current job?^[11]
- Present your answers as short stories. You should be able to tell a compelling story about your career path, or about particular skills you have learned. Always have specific examples from real job situations ready to validate any statements you make.^[12]



- 4 Make connections.** Research shows that referrals are 5 to 10 times more effective than applying directly to a business. And yet, cultivating contacts can be particularly difficult for people with social anxiety. Here are some tips to build your network:
- Use LinkedIn. Connect with people who can help you there and keep your profile up to date.
 - Get organized. Make a spreadsheet with the contact info of people you respect and would like to work with. Depth is more important than breadth here.^[13]
 - Schedule a follow-up. Put entries in your calendar reminding you to get in touch with your contacts. This doesn't have to be a big deal. A simple email asking them how they are doing and if you can help out in any way will do.^[14]
 - Stay in touch in creative ways. Keep track of your contacts on LinkedIn. If they are promoted or get a new job, congratulate them. If you come across a news story or blog they might like, pass it along. If you share a hobby in common, send them articles about it.^[15]
 - Say thank you. Remember to always thank your contacts if you have taken their advice and it helps. A little gratitude will go a long way.

Part 3 of 3: Coping with Social Anxiety



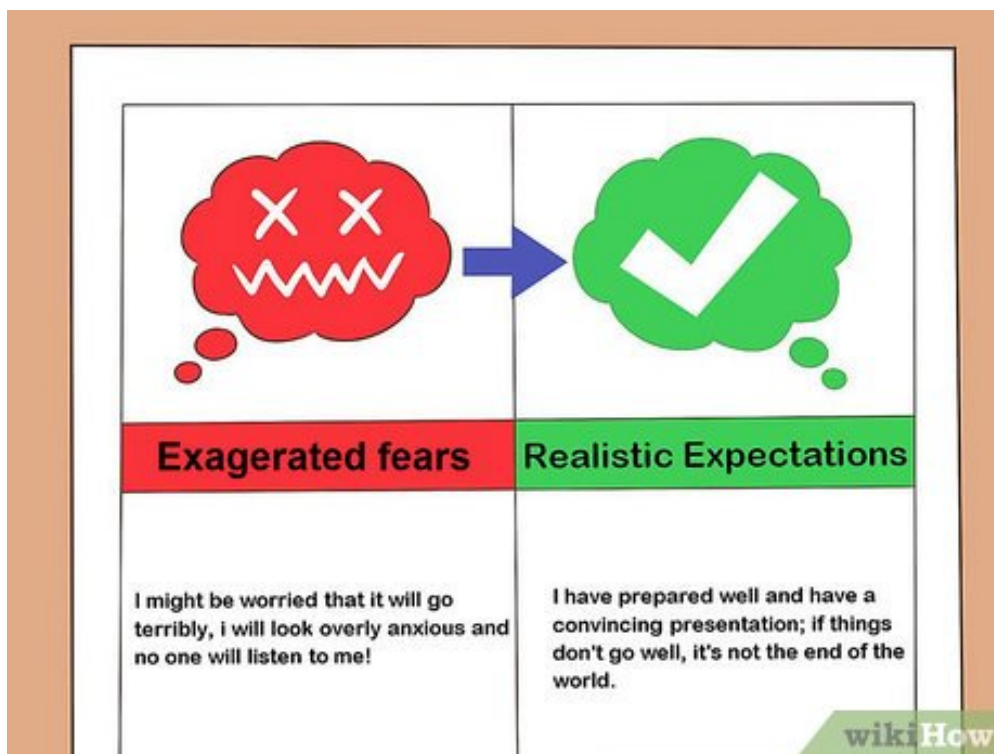
1 Talk to a therapist. Cognitive behavioral therapy has been shown to be highly effective in reducing social anxiety. A therapist can help you recognize your fears, teach you relaxation tips to cope with them, and help you overcome them by confronting them 1 stage at time. For severe cases, an antidepressant may be prescribed to help lower anxiety levels so that the therapy will be more effective. If you have social anxiety, get in touch with a therapist as soon as possible.^[16]



2 Learn coping techniques. Everyone feels anxiety. It is the body's natural response to stress or danger. Some people — whether because of genetics or environment — have an overly developed response. Fortunately, there are proven strategies you can use to help control your anxiety.^[17]



3 Arrive at work early. Getting to work early will allow you to settle in and prepare yourself for the day. You are also much more likely to meet people one on one as they filter in this way, as opposed to entering an office with everyone already present.^[18]



4 Record and evaluate your thoughts. Social anxiety is driven by exaggerated fears: *Everyone is staring at me... This is going to be a disaster... I'll sound like an idiot.* Writing down such thoughts will help you identify and combat such exaggerations. Replace them with realistic expectations.

- For example, if you're about to give a presentation, you might be worried that it will go terribly, you will look overly anxious, no one will listen to you, etc. Replace these thoughts with more realistic expectations: *I have prepared well and have a convincing presentation; if things don't go well, it's not the end of the world.*

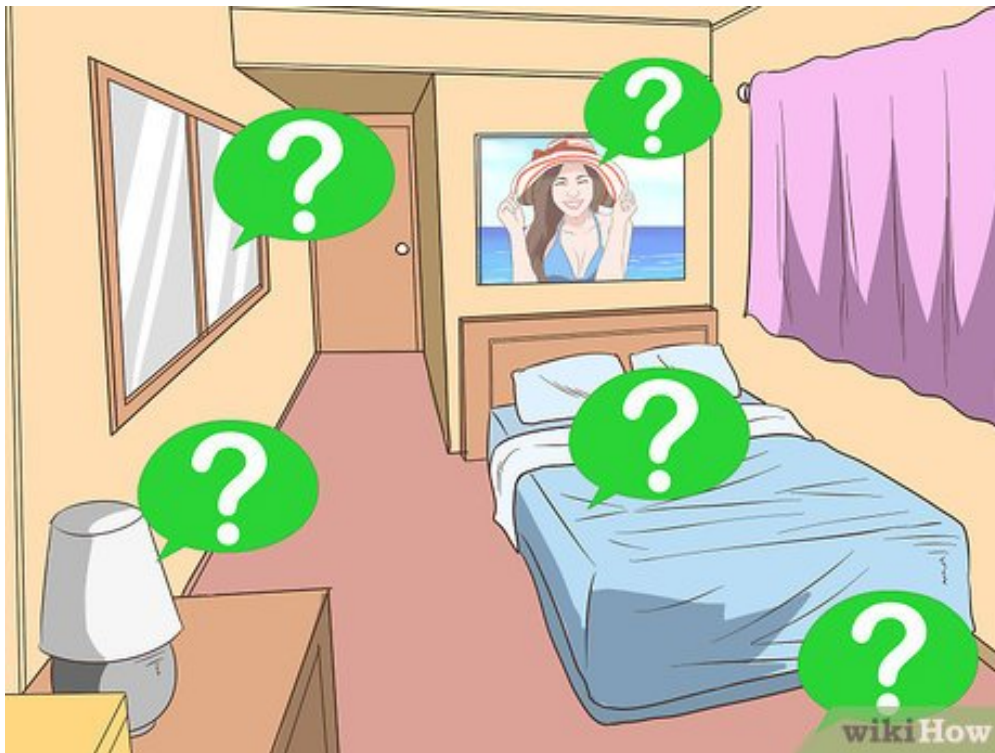


5 Relabel your anxiety as excitement. The symptoms of anxiety — increased heart rate and breathing, elevated alertness, a tendency to sweat — are more or less identical to those of excitement. It might sound trivial, but how you think of what you are feeling matters. Instead of thinking you are anxious, relabel it as being excited. This will help produce confidence instead of fear.



6 Practice deep breathing. Breathing deeply and regularly triggers a calming response that decreases heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension.^[19] Practice these breathing techniques at home so that you will have them on hand to help fight anxiety:

- **Slow Breathing** — Breathe in for a count of four, hold it for one to two seconds, then out for a count of four. This will help to calm your nervous system.^[20]
- **Resistance Breathing** – Creating resistance while you breathe out has a calming effect. This can be achieved by breathing out through the nose, by pursing the lips when breathing out (as if blowing out air), or by making a sound when you breath out (like "ohm" or the word "relax").



7 Turn your focus outwards. Anxiety mounts as you observe your own performance: *I'm not persuasive enough; My hands are sweaty; I'm anxious; This will be a disaster.* It can help to turn your focus to the things around you. This both removes the focus from yourself and causes you to focus on the present as opposed to future worries.[21]

- Describe the objects around you — Focus in on your environment: the carpet, the walls, the furniture. Describe it in detail, e.g. this table is oak, very solid, with a dark finish. It sometimes helps to touch the object you are describing.[22]
- Focus on the people around you — Listen closely to what they are saying. Examine their mannerisms or clothes.[23]



8 Accept discomfort. No matter how many coping strategies you know, the truth is that you will be anxious sometimes. That's ok. Everybody is. Sometimes you must accept discomfort in order to do something that is worthwhile. Focus on why you are doing the task. For example, "I am anxious, but it is worth it to get this job." Or, "I am anxious, but it is worth it to further my career."^[24]



Community Q&A

Question

Is cleaning houses a good option for someone with social anxiety?



Community Answer

I imagine cleaning houses would be a good job if you struggle with this, as you won't normally be working directly with other people.

Helpful 12 Not Helpful 7

Question

Can I get a job while coping with social anxiety caused by bullying?



Community Answer

Of course. You should not let your anxiety prevent you from having a normal life. You also have no obligation to inform your employer about your mental health issues. If you're still dealing with bullies, talk to someone about this, like your parents, teachers, a counselor, etc.

Helpful 5 Not Helpful 2

Question

Are there any jobs for teens with bad anxiety?



AbigailAbernathy
Top Answerer

You could work in food service in the kitchen, be a dishwasher at a restaurant, a worker in a warehouse preparing shipments for delivery/receiving shipments, landscape, paint walls, etc. Jobs for people specifically with anxiety can be hard to find, but a job outdoors in the fresh air (like landscaping) might be ideal for that.

Helpful 5 Not Helpful 5

Question

I struggle a lot with my current job as a pharmacist. I recently applied for a job as a nighttime industry pharmacist, no patient contact. Any advice if I am called for an interview?



Community Answer

Interviewers are used to dealing with nervous candidates on a daily basis, they are usually very understanding. Take a bottle of water with you, have a drink before you go in, and keep the bottle with you. It can be very comforting holding onto that cool bottle. If you go blank, don't panic, repeat the question back to them or say, "I will have to think about that for a moment." It gives the impression that you think before you speak, rather than blurting out the first thing that comes into your head.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 0

Question

What are the best jobs for people with social anxiety?



Nico
Top Answerer

Jobs that don't involve much interaction with others are ideal for folks with social anxiety. You could try a creative job, such as writing, creating art or graphic designer, or event photographer. If you like to work with animals, you could be a animal care worker, kennel operator, or veterinarian.

Helpful 0 Not Helpful 0

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About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **Trudi Griffin, LPC, MS**. Trudi Griffin is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Wisconsin specializing in Addictions and Mental Health. She provides therapy to people who struggle with addictions, mental health, and trauma in community health settings and private practice. She received her MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Marquette University in 2011. This article has been viewed 149,823 times.

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