# 5 Ways to Manage Your Anxiety During the Coronavirus Outbreak

It's nearly impossible to do anything right now without hearing the word "coronavirus." Social media's buzzing with mentions of COVID-19; news sites can't keep up with the ever-developing updates; even stores and online retailers are running out of household items like bleach wipes and hand sanitizer.

The developing panic is real, especially when the only news being disseminated seems to be coronavirus news. And for people who already struggle with anxiety disorders, the daily reminders and updates about coronavirus sweeping the globe is only adding insult to injury.

Of course, coronavirus fears aren't entirely unfounded: According to the latest situation report from the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 4.9 million people worldwide have been confirmed as having COVID-19—and more than 1.5 million of those people are here in the US, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of May 20, 2020. The newest cases in the US also suggest community-spread, meaning a person who neither traveled to an affected region or had direct contact with an infected person developed the illness.

While the CDC insists that your overall risk of contracting COVID-19 is low, that information alone is enough to trigger anxiety.  But it turns out, what make the coronavirus so anxiety-inducing is what we don't know about it.  This is because it's new, therefore history with it is not there, making it feel more unknown and uncertain.

While the anxiety surrounding the corona virus outbreak is understandable, you can't control how the outbreak will pan out in the US, but you can control how you react to it.  Here are some tips:

**Assess your own personal risk for contracting the coronavirus.**

You can take a proactive role in your health and anxiety levels by figuring out your own personal risk for developing the virus.  Has anyone in your community tested positive for the virus or have you been exposed to anyone who's been ill recently?  Do you have immune issues or breathing problems, a heart condition or diabetes?

**Try to limit your corona virus news consumption.**

You should at least be aware that coronavirus is currently an issue, and know where it's showing up in relation to you.  However, there is such a thing as too much news.  Try to limit the time you spend listening and watching the Corona virus news.  Too much exposure will make you feel more anxious.

**Follow the correct preventive methods to protect against the virus.**

Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick.  Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.  If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Doing all those things can help you feel more in control of the situation which can ease your anxiety.

**Remind yourself that you're doing the best you can in this situation.**

If you find yourself starting to get worked up over the virus in any given moment, do a grounding technique to calm down.  That involves looking around you, recognizing when you're in a safe space like your home, and reminding yourself that you're doing the best you can.  If that doesn't work, try to think about something that's in front of you, like noticing a bird flying outside your window or how your desk feels beneath your hands.  These are good distractions to help break up the negative chain of anxious thinking.

If, despite trying these tips to help quell your corona virus anxiety, you still feel overwhelmed with anxiety and are having problems going about your daily life, it's a good idea to talk to a professional.

*Reference:  Korin Miller*