

# Natural Help 4...

## Phobias



### What is a Phobia?

When a fear severely impairs a person's ability to function properly, they would be diagnosed as having a [phobia](#). A phobia is characterized by **an irrational fear of a specific object or situation that interferes with an individual's ability to function.**

The feared object or situation **may or may not be something that is dangerous.** For example, a person can have a [phobia](#) or a fear of mice, dirt or going to the dentist. Or the fear may have potential danger such as a snake, or heights, but the fear is excessive and exaggerated.

### Diagnosing Phobias

It is a good idea to make an appointment with a psychologist if you feel your fear has reached phobic proportions. The psychologist will then assess you by asking about your fear, what triggers it and how it is disrupting your life.

[Phobias](#) **often occur along with other disorders** and so your psychologist will also try to rule out other problems such as another category of anxiety disorder, depression or substance abuse before a diagnosis of a specific [Phobia](#) is made. You will probably also be asked questions about your family history and details about your childhood development.

### Symptoms of a Phobia

People with [Phobias](#) develop "safe places" (usually their own home), but it may also include any other frequented areas where they feel psychologically safe and secure. In addition, they often develop "safe people" with whom they feel totally comfortable and can depend on should something happen.

When agoraphobics leave these people or places of safety, they often experience symptoms of extreme anxiety or a panic attack. This results in obsessive avoidance behavior (they may only want to shop at a particular shopping mall and will drive to the next suburb to do so) and in extreme cases Agoraphobics live a life of recluse, seldom stepping out their front door.

### Who Suffers from Phobias? Is there a Cure?

**Main causes of phobias** include past traumas and generally develop in late adolescence or early adulthood. [Phobias](#) tend to affect more women than men. This is a very limiting and isolating disorder that can take control of a person's

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life – adversely affecting daily function. However, one of the [facts about Phobias](#) is that they are treatable and it is never too late to reclaim a panic-free life!

## What Causes Phobias?

### Main causes of phobias include:

**Direct Experience** - This is when a person develops a [phobia](#) after a particularly bad experience. A child that is bitten by a dog may develop a [phobia](#) of dogs, or an individual that was trapped in an elevator for hours may develop claustrophobia.

**A False Alarm** - This occurs when a person has an unexpected feeling of panic or a panic attack during a certain situation. The individual then associates this alarm response with that particular situation. For example, many people with a [phobia](#) of driving haven't been in a car accident, but have experienced a panic attack while driving.

**Observing Others** - In some cases it is simply enough to watch or even hear someone else's awful experience. A [phobia](#) of doctors can develop after a child hears another child's anguished screams coming from the doctor's office. [Phobias](#) may also develop when children observe the behavior of a phobic parent.

**Being Told** - Sometimes just being warned repeatedly about a certain danger can cause a [phobia](#). A child who has a fretful parent who continually warns of the danger of snakes may develop a [phobia](#) of snakes, despite never having seen one in real life.

### Help for Phobias

A [phobia](#) usually requires treatment before it improves or is eradicated. In addition to conventional medicine, alternative treatments such as relaxation and deep breathing techniques as well as **herbal and homeopathic remedies may be very helpful** along with psychotherapy.

As with other psychological ailments, **a holistic approach has proven beneficial** in treating [phobias](#) the **main causes of phobias**, while also incorporating mainstream and complementary treatments along with balanced diet and exercise.

## Treatment Options for Phobias

### The Conventional Approach

Many people with debilitating [phobias](#) are prescribed scheduled drugs to control their anxiety. These may include anti-anxiety drugs such as benzodiazepines, Buspar or antidepressants such as Prozac. Be sure that you understand and research the side effects and potential for addiction when accepting a prescription for any psychiatric drug and be aware that there are alternatives.

### Alternative or Complementary approaches



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

Research has shown that anxiety in general (including [phobias](#)) responds best to a combination of treatment modalities. A more holistic approach would include appropriate therapeutic treatment by a registered psychologist, as well as the use of natural remedies, relaxation techniques and other treatment methods such as hypnotherapy or acupuncture.

## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Desensitization or exposure therapy is the most common method of treating [phobias](#). This method includes gradual exposure to the feared object or situation at a gentle and understanding pace. If you are afraid of dogs, this therapy will encourage you to speak about dogs, look at pictures of them, be in the same room as one and eventually touch one.

All this will take time and you will be encouraged to go at a pace which is least distressing for you, while still making steady progress. CBT will also challenge your thoughts about your [phobia](#) and change them into more positive and empowering thoughts, giving you control over your fears.

## Relaxation Techniques

Meditation, deep breathing and muscle relaxation are a few techniques that have been shown to reduce anxiety and clear the mind of unwanted thoughts and concerns. These techniques are often practiced along with CBT to help you manage your fear as you face it.

## Natural Herbal and Homeopathic Remedies

There are certain natural products that can be taken to help relieve some of the anxiety associated with specific [Phobias](#), as well as to **reduce overall anxiety levels** and promote a sense of well being and confidence. These can be especially useful if used in conjunction with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

The calming effects of certain herbs such as Hypericum perforatum (St John's Wort), Passiflora incarnata, Scutellaria laterifolia (Scullcap) and Valerian, can help to take the edge off the initial exposure to the feared object or situation and reduce over-all anxiety. These remedies can be taken without the worry of unwanted side-effects and can help to restore the body's natural balance and serenity.

There are also certain homeopathic remedies which are prescribed for specific [Phobias](#) and which can help to **reduce the symptoms of anxiety and panic** which accompany the [phobia](#).

## Other Disorders Related to Phobias

Having a Specific [Phobia](#) can lead to poor coping strategies and result in other problems such as depression, isolation, and substance abuse. It is also not uncommon to find that an individual has more than one [phobia](#), or has a specific [phobia](#) as well as another anxiety disorder.

## Tips for Coping with Phobias

## Ask Our Experts a Product Question

If you have a question about one of our products, its usage or dosage, ask Michele and her team of experts about about it [HERE!](#) We will do our best to get you an answer within 24 hours.

## Great Health Sites

[Naturally Beautiful Me](#)

[Natural Pet Health Blog](#)

[Natural Holistic Health](#)

[Mom's Blog](#)

[Health or High Water](#)

[Pet Herbal Info Blog](#)

[The Natural Beat Blog](#)

[PetAlive Natural & Herbal Remedies for Pets](#)

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- **Take small steps towards overcoming phobias.** If you attempt to rush into it, you may feel over-whelmed and discouraged. Similarly, if you avoid taking any steps, you may never conquer your fear!
- **Learn relaxation techniques** to help you manage your anxiety and fear. This can be done by consulting a psychologist or by the use of a self help CD, especially designed for this purpose.
- **Positive Thinking!** Keep optimistic when facing your fears by reminding yourself that you have the power of overcoming phobias and that there is no real danger.
- **Take steps to empower yourself** in other areas of your life. Take up a hobby or sport, join a club or take a self-help course. This often has a 'spill over effect' on anxiety in general. If you help yourself to feel more confident, you will feel more in control of your situation and more able to conquer your fears.
- **Read as much as you can about your condition.** There are many self help books with valuable tips, facts about phobias, and advice on overcoming phobias.

## Determining the Seriousness of Fears

Little anxieties and unreasonable fears are a normal part of growing up. Most children go through stages where they are afraid of the dark or loud thunderstorms, but they quickly grow out of these fears with time.

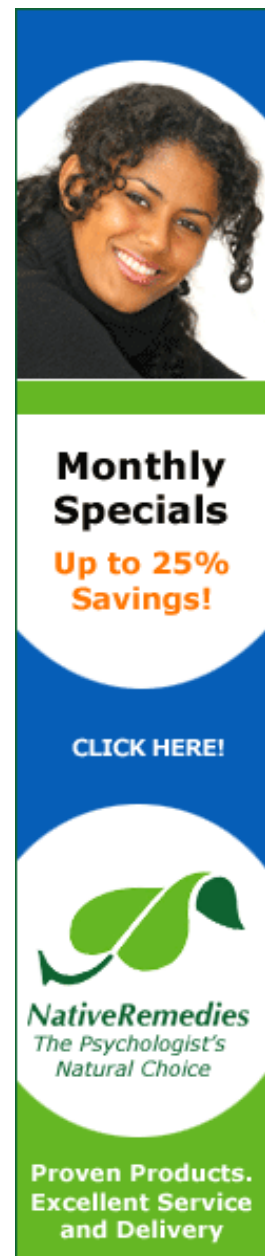
It is only when these fears are causing considerable disruption in their daily routine and are not normal fears for their age that you should seek help. Try helping your child through these fears by noting the following facts about phobias:

- **Acknowledge that the fear is real.** You may be certain that there is nothing to fear, but to your child that fear is very real. Telling children that they are just being silly is not going to make that fear any less.
- **Don't accommodate your child's fears.** If your child fears dogs, don't purposefully avoid all dogs as this will reinforce the need for avoidance and confirm the reality of the danger.
- **Talk to your child about his or her fear.** There may have been a triggering event that needs to be spoken about, or your child may have mistaken information that needs to be corrected.
- **Remind your child of other past fears that he or she managed to overcome.** This might give your child the confidence needed to face current fears.
- **Teach your child coping strategies** such as deep breathing and self-reassurance so that the feelings of anxiety become more manageable.

## People in History with Phobias

Famous people who either presently suffer or have once suffered from specific phobias include:

- Aretha Franklin (singer), Whoopi Goldberg (actress), Billy Bob Thornton (actor) and Muhammad Ali (boxing champion) all suffered from Aviophobia – a fear of flying
- Natalie Wood (actress) was hydrophobic - a fear of water



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- Tennis star Andre Agassi suffers from arachnophobia – fear of spiders
- Author Anne Rice has stated that she suffers from alhuophobia – fear of the dark
- Adolf Hitler was claustrophobic – fear of enclosed spaces
- Napoleon Bonaparte (emperor of France), suffered from ailurophobia - fear of cats
- Composer Fredric-Francois Chopin had a fear of being buried alive (Taphephobia) as did Hans Christian Anderson

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a

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tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market –giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

## **Related Natural Remedies:**

**MindSoothe™** : Promote balanced mood and feelings of wellbeing.

MindSoothe is a 100% safe, non-addictive, natural herbal remedy that has been especially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for adults and teens, and comes in a compact capsule form, making it easy to take.



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MindSoothe can be used to safely maintain emotional health, balanced mood, [emotional wellness](#) and systemic harmony in the brain and nervous system, without harmful side effects.

This remedy contains a selection of herbs known for their calming and supportive function in maintaining brain and nervous system health, [emotional](#) balance and overall wellbeing.

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**[Calm Within CD™](#)** : Improve relaxation, support balanced emotions and stress levels.

The Calm Within CD is composed by our Clinical Psychologist to promote good physical and emotional health using a specially developed therapeutic sound techniques and [soothing music](#).

A combination of therapeutic script and natures [soothing sounds](#) induce a state of [deep relaxation](#), effectively relieving tension and supporting the body's natural ability to heal. In therapy with music that heals anxiety and depression such as natures soothing sounds the listener is taken through a series of progressive relaxation steps, leading to a state of deep relaxation. Thereafter guided imagery is used to further enhance and expand therapeutic benefits.

[Learn more about the Calm Within CD](#)

**[Nerve Tonic™](#)** : Promotes nervous system health, maintains balanced mood and worry free mind.

Triple Complex Nerve Tonic is a combination of three, cell-supporting tissue salts, especially selected for their effect on brain and nervous system health. This combination of tissue salts can be used regularly in a general capacity to **promote systemic balance in the brain**, spinal cord and the entire nervous system, as well as in conjunction with other remedies to maintain therapeutic effectiveness.

Tissue Salts, also called cell salts or biochemic salts, are composed of **minerals that occur naturally at a cellular level in our bodies** and all organic matter on earth (plants, rocks and soil).

There have been **twelve essential tissue salts** identified as important components of all body cells and without which, true health is not possible. Each tissue salt plays a different, yet vital role in maintaining cellular health in the organs and **nervous systems** of the body.

Ensuring the healthy functioning of all brain and nervous system cells enhances the bio-availability of supplements, remedies and even nutrients in your diet. It also lessens the chance of a **nervous breakdown**. **Treating panic disorder** in people who suffer a **nervous breakdown** usually involves therapy. The doctor **treating panic disorder** will monitor the symptoms carefully to establish a treatment plan that aims to restore the health of the **nervous system**.

And, because our tissue salts are naturally occurring in the body and manufactured to ensure safe, yet optimum potency, they are safe to use for all ages, as well as

during pregnancy.

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**MindSoothe Jr.**<sup>™</sup> : Promotes emotional and psychological health and balanced mood in children.

MindSoothe Jr. is a 100% safe, non-addictive, natural herbal remedy, especially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for children.

MindSoothe Jr. supports the brain's **natural ability to regulate emotion and mood** – maintaining production of essential brain hormones and chemicals related to nervous system health and emotional well-being, thereby helping to maintain balanced mood and optimum performance. MindSoothe Jr. can be used to safely promote well being and naturally support health and systemic balance in the brain and nervous system - **without any harmful side effects** or risk of addiction.

Instead of the capsules used in the adult formula, MindSoothe Jr. comes in convenient and easy to administer drop form – making it simple to adjust dosage for different age groups.

The formula remains true to the **whole spectrum method** of herbal extraction, ensuring the bio-availability and balance of all the active ingredients contained in the remedy. This method of manufacture maintains all active ingredients in perfect balance – exactly as nature intended!

[Learn more about MindSoothe Jr.](#)

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