



MARCOS MACHADO M.D., P.C.

FAMILY PRACTICE PHYSICIAN

10019 Miller Road, Swartz Creek, MI 48473 [www.machadomd.com](http://www.machadomd.com) Phone 810.635.4476 Fax 810.635.4357

Panic attacks are common problems that certain people with anxiety can experience.

Typically panic attacks are caused by a change in your blood pH (acid/base balance). Breathing quickly causes you to exhale more carbon dioxide than usual, which leads to a change in the acid levels in the blood. This in turn can cause symptoms like chest pains, chest tightness, feeling short of breath, numbness or tingling, a sense of impending doom, and overall just feeling horrible.

Knowing that this problem is related to the fast breathing leads to a few simple treatments to restore the blood pH back to normal and end the panic attack.

In the middle of a panic attack:

- try to slow your breathing down
- if you are unable to slow your breathing, holding your breath intermittently will also help
- breathing into a paper bag can be very helpful, as you re-breathe the carbon dioxide and it raises the levels that way.

As a preventative measure, teaching your body to breathe slower can be helpful.

- every hour, about 10 times a day, stop what you are doing and focus on your breathing for about a minute. Think only of breathing slowly and controlled. You may focus on a scripture verse or a positive thought.

In a study done on people who did this on a daily basis, they experienced less panic attacks and when they did have one, they were less severe.