

[Print](#)

# Nomophobia: 2 out of 3 Adults Have it, Do You?

By Rosemary Black

[Do you recognize these telltale signs of the fear of being out of cell phone contact? Here's how to manage your obsession.](#)

Donna Talarico, who works in marketing at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, realized she was addicted to her cell phone when it "died" and she had to leave it charging in her car. That night, as she listened to a band at a nightclub, Talarico found herself clutching a small rectangular box of crayons "for comfort" while she didn't have her phone.

"Without my phone, it's almost like I don't have a connection to the world any more because everything lives in my phone," Talarico says. "It's such a bad feeling."

She's not the only one to feel badly when without a cell phone. Nearly two out of every three adults suffers from nomophobia, the fear of being out of cell phone contact, according to a new survey in the UK that was reported on Cnet.com. In fact, some 66 percent of the 1,000 individuals interviewed fret about not having a phone with them. This is an increase of 50 percent from four years ago. Younger adults are more likely to suffer from nomophobia, with the highest incidence occurring in the 18 to 24-year-old age group (77 percent). In the 25 to 34-year-old age group, 68 percent have nomophobia, according to the study.

Why do so many people fly into a panic over such a small device? "Cell phones have become such a part of our lives that it is like losing a part of how we know how to talk to others," says Elizabeth Waterman, Psy.D., behavioral health specialist at Morningside Recovery in Newport Beach, California. "Cell phones have become our gateway to connectivity with the world. We may even see them as a survival tool, so people develop a fear of losing them."

## How Can You Overcome Nomophobia?

**1. Practice** a technique that therapists use to treat Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Waterman advises. "If a person with nomophobia came to me, I would tell the person they would have to give me their phone and not check it," she says. Then, when the person feels anxiety, learn alternative methods for coping with it. This involves learning to be present in the moment, Waterman says. "Focus on what is happening now," she suggests. "Do some deep breathing to calm your body and mind."

**2. Learn** some self-soothing techniques, Waterman says. "Maybe it is smelling a pleasant scent, or reading something funny in a book, or just sitting and watching people go by," she says. "A big part of coping with anxiety and discomfort is learning to restructure your problematic thoughts."

**3. Challenge** the negative thoughts that creep into your mind when you don't have your phone, Waterman says. For instance, you may have the idea that something terrible will happen to your child when you don't have your phone, and no one will be able to reach you. Ask yourself: Is my child safe now? Has my child ever been in an accident before and they haven't been able to reach me? Simply doing this may be enough to calm you down.

**4. Take measures** to protect yourself if something does happen to your phone, says April Masini, an advice columnist whose website is AskApril.com. Buy insurance to replace a lost or broken phone. Back up all your contacts on your computer. "At the end of the day, facing your fears and doing what you can to ensure the best possible outcome if the worst possible outcome occurs will help calm your nerves," Masini says.

## Source:

Moore, Elizabeth Armstrong. " 'Nomophobia' up as more folks fear being mobileless." 16 February 2012. Cnet.

[http://news.cnet.com/8301-27083\\_3-57379467-247/nomophobia-up-as-more-folks-fear-being-mobileless/](http://news.cnet.com/8301-27083_3-57379467-247/nomophobia-up-as-more-folks-fear-being-mobileless/)

