

# How to Live With Ablutophobia

By Allen Smith, eHow User



Ablutophobia is an anxiety condition characterized by intense and an almost paralyzing fear centered around washing the body. While it's difficult to determine what actually triggers Ablutophobia, it may be associated with a particular incident to which a person associates an undesirable effect. Like most other phobias, this one is often accompanied by physical symptoms. Here are some approaches to living with Ablutophobia.

Difficulty: Challenging

## Instructions

- 1 Most phobias have been successfully treated with a variety of behavior therapies. The early Behaviorists used a classical conditioning approach, believing that the phobic response was a simple reflex that is acquired to counteract non-dangerous stimuli.
- 2 Early approaches entailed positioning the patient next to continued, non-dangerous stimuli. After time, they realized that there was nothing to fear and the fear would naturally dissipate.
- 3 Others felt that the best approach was through EXPOSURE TREATMENT, whereby the patient is "flooded" or immersed in a fear reflex until the unjustified fear faded away.
- 4 Today, biofeedback is used to completely relax a patient before they are introduced to new treatments. The patient is taught how to control their pulse rate, respiration rate and ELECTRODERMAL RESPONSES.
- 5 Another popular method for treating Ablutophobia is SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION, paired with MODELING. In modeling, patients in the presence of a phobic stimulus observe other "models" (e.g. other patients) who have learned to respond through relaxation instead of fear. The patient is encouraged to emulate the successful approaches of others.
- 6 More contemporary approaches include using "virtual reality" helmets to display a phobic situation that is controlled by the therapist. If the patient's response rates get too high, the therapist can slow down or eliminate the stimulus, replacing it with counter-conditioning relaxation [exercises](#).