

Running head: ACROPHOBIA

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Acrophobia: Symptoms, Conditions, and Treatment

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Acrophobia: Symptoms, Conditions, and Treatment

Acrophobia (fear of heights) may be related to a high degree of height vertigo caused by visual dependence in the maintenance of standing balance (Whitney, 2004, para 1). A person with such kind of phobia may experience its symptoms being on top of a high building, as well as just standing on a chair or climbing a ladder. It all depends on phobia's severity. Acrophobia is one of the most prevalent phobias, affecting as many as 1 in 20 individuals. Of course, heights often evoke fear in the general population too, and this suggests that acrophobia might actually represent the hypersensitive manifestation of an everyday, rational fear (Coelho, Wallis, 2010, p. 1).

The symptoms of acrophobia differ, but the most typical ones include an overall feeling of dread, shortness of breath, rapid breathing, nausea, sweating, and irregular heartbeat. There are also several conditions which are also related to acrophobia:

- Vertigo is a medical condition that causes a sensation of spinning and dizziness. Malingophobia is a phobia in which the fear of developing vertigo can actually lead to vertigo-like symptoms. Acrophobia can induce similar feelings, but the three conditions are not the same. See a doctor for tests if you experience vertigo symptoms. Medical tests may include bloodwork, CT scans and MRIs, which can rule out a variety of neurological conditions.
- Bathmophobia, or the fear of slopes and stairs, is sometimes related to acrophobia. In bathmophobia, you may panic when viewing a steep slope, even if you have no need to climb the slope. Although many people with bathmophobia have acrophobia, most acrophobia sufferers do not also experience bathmophobia.
- Climacophobia is related to bathmophobia, except that the fear generally occurs only when contemplating making a climb. If you suffer from climacophobia, you are probably not afraid to see a steep set of stairs as long as you can remain safely at the bottom. However, climacophobia may occur in tandem with acrophobia.
- Aerophobia is the specific fear of flying. Depending on the severity of your fear, you may be

afraid of airports and airplanes, or may only feel the fear when in the air. Acrophobia may occasionally occur alongside acrophobia (Fritscher, 2014, para. 2).

Acrophobia can be the reason for some people not to lead a normal social life. Beside from being unable to climb the stairs, stand on a balcony, or travel by plane, it may also be a reason for not being able to perform one's professional duties efficiently. Despite the fact that symptoms and reasons for being acrophobic differ, there are several methods of managing and curing it.

Acrophobia can be treated in similar ways to other phobic and anxiety disorders, with a range of treatments including reality therapy and cognitive behavior therapy and the use of anti-anxiety medication. Effective treatment is based on the assumption that acrophobia is a learned response to being in certain situations. This learned response is typically powerful, uncomfortable, embarrassing, inconvenient, and debilitating at times. And just as you can learn to have a particular response you can un-learn it. Therapists can help people who have acrophobia to develop coping skills to manage their fear and anxiety. This involves understanding and adjusting thoughts and beliefs that help create the anxiety, learning and practicing specific behavioral social skills to increase confidence, and then slowly and gradually practicing these skills in real situations (Acrophobia, 2005, Psychologist Anytime Anywhere). As we can see, acrophobia can cause a lot of discomfort in an everyday life, as well as at work. However, the methods described above can help a person overcome the fear of heights and lead an active life.

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