# How The Verge is coping with election anxiety




The 2020 presidential election is nearly upon us, and the hours leading up to it are full of unknown, eldritch horrors. The old gods are awakening, and the pollsters are sharpening their needles.

Or at least it feels that way. Because so many bad things have happened in America this year, every day can feel like navigating a field chock-full of unexploded ordnance — and all there is to do, really, is put on a mask and vote.

Personally, I feel like I'm T-posing at the end of the world. So I've leaned into compiling a playlist of anime fight scenes on YouTube: they're power fantasies that always end with the good guys winning. It's been helping a little.

Many of my colleagues have come up with their own, unique ways to deal with the fact that reality has lately become surreal. Here are a few election coping strategies, from us, your friends at *The Verge*. Hopefully this gets us through those long hours still ahead. — *Bijan Stephen*

**Barbara Krasnoff**: I try to really concentrate on other things — my work, a novel I'm desperately trying to write, and day-to-day concerns. That doesn't always work. So my partner and I have been watching *Safari Live* (live feeds from various African wildlife preserves, with commentary), 1930s comedies, humorous mysteries, bad science fiction films, *The Queen's Gambit* (wonderful series!), and, of course, *The Great British Baking Show* — anything that has nothing to do with politics. We haven't chosen what we'll watch on Election Day, but it will probably be lightweight, and I'll have to hide my phone to prevent myself from checking it every five minutes.

**Sarah Smithers:** I've found that exercising is a good cure for my normal, run-of-the-mill anxiety. And eating refined sugar is a bad cure (but still a cure!) for my pandemic anxiety. So tomorrow I am going to spend a lot of time on my treadmill while also eating 2–8 ice cream sandwiches.

*"Staying the hell away from 'the needle.'"*
**Andrew J. Hawkins:** I'm coping with the election by making granola, cleaning the kitchen, building Lego sets with my son, and staying the hell away from "the needle."

**Kim Lyons:** Since I am weirdly competitive but also hate feeling unproductive, I've started using the Duolingo language app to brush up on my Spanish and French. The little green owl nudges me with text alerts when I need to boost my XP to compete with other players. It's been a much better use of mobile screen time than doomscrolling on Twitter.

**Kait Sanchez:** My partner and I just had a stressful and prolonged move into a new apartment, so "luckily" I've had other stressors to distract me from the election. When I reach my nightly critical mass of unpacking and organizing, I turn to a new routine that's been keeping me from doomscrolling into the wee hours. I listen to a podcast (usually fiction,

but generally anything that's not political news), and I play *many* levels of the *I Love Hue Too* game on my phone. Between the audio stimulation and the need to focus for the puzzles, I'm too absorbed to fall into an anxiety spiral. Unclear what will happen if I ever run out of levels, but I'll cross that bridge when I get to it.

**Megan Farokhmanesh:** I'm coping with the election by eating cake for dinner and listening to Swedish death metal.

**Taylor Lyles:** My election anxiety consists of me doing a lot of gaming. I mean, I am *always* gaming outside of work. But lately I have been obsessed with PC gaming.

I built my own gaming PC years ago and am ready to future-proof it for the next generation of gaming. A lot of the PC parts I have in my current rig are not dated by any means, but I just like being ten steps ahead of the industry since new hardware is always coming out on PC. Since the parts in my current rig are mostly going to be swapped out, I plan to recycle those parts and turn them into a separate gaming desktop. I don't know exactly who it will be for, but I think it would be a fun project to do and it helps ease my stress and keep myself busy during off work hours.

*"I am demanding inane gossip from my friends."*
**Nicole Wetsman:** I am demanding inane gossip from my friends, spending most of the day under my weighted blanket, and eating this very good cake. These help me manage about 8 percent of my election anxiety and the rest is just…still there.

**Adi Robertson:** I channeled my pandemic anxiety into prototyping a video game. Now I've got election anxiety too! This is surely making me twice as productive. Do not contradict me.

**Sean Hollister:** Maybe this is perverse, but I'm watching *Designated Survivor.* Yes, it's all about political turmoil and disaster, but it's also a feel-good power fantasy about a *non-*

partisan politician. Imagine that! Also I may or may not have squirreled away a LOT of Halloween candy.

**Cameron Faulkner:** Distractions are nice, but I've learned that the best way for me to deal with my anxiety is to try to face it head-on. You know, think about all of the possible outcomes and try to imagine what the next four years of my life might look like with each one. So, my desk is covered in game controllers and other fun gadgets, but as much as I try to distract myself, I'm just kind of inescapably stuck in the moment. I hope you're faring better!

**Jay Peters:** I've kept my mind off the election by playing a lot of *Hades*, the new roguelike from Supergiant Games. Each trek through the Underworld takes my full attention, requiring me to expertly fight against waves of enemies and thoughtfully select which abilities will best aid me in my journey. The game's brilliantly-done characters draw me into their individual stories, and the more I play, the more I learn about them. And perhaps most importantly, each run only takes 30 to 40 minutes, which is just short enough that I regularly sneak in an extra run (or two) during my daily play sessions.

Sure, playing *Hades* may not be the most productive use of my time. But the game keeps me from constantly refreshing Twitter or Reddit.

*"A whole lot of whiskey."*
**Julia Alexander:** I'm relying heavily on *What We Do in the Shadows* marathons, *Arrested Development* rewatches, and absurd British comedy that makes me feel better about whatever's going on outside my tiny studio apartment. Also, whiskey. A whole lot of whiskey.

**Sophie Erickson:** How am I coping with election anxiety? Not well.

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