

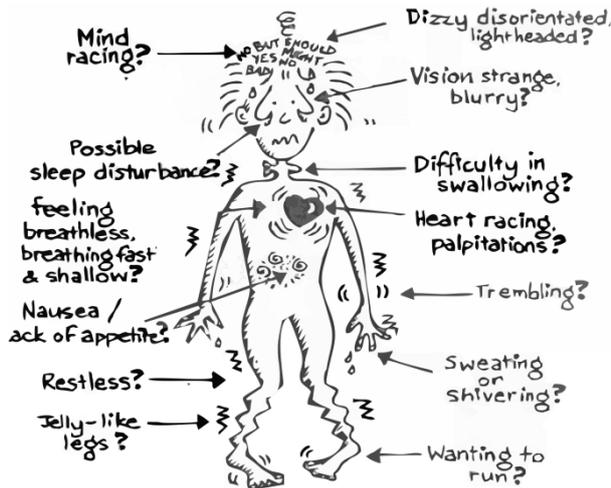
# What is anxiety?

Anxiety describes the feeling of when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future.

It is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat. Anxiety can affect anyone, and everyone – some people get it a lot, and some people experience it a lot less, but we all feel it on some level at some time in our lives. For example, when we sit exams, start a new school, attend a job interview, or public speaking. Sometimes it can happen for no reason, but afterwards, we usually calm down and start to feel better about things. However, when you are no longer in a stressful situation, and you still feel worried or panicky, that’s when anxiety can become more of a concern.

## How will it make you feel?

It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.



## Other ways it can make you feel...

- Worried
- Irritable
- Impatient
- "On edge"
- Tired
- Indecisive
- Forgetful
- Distressed in social situations
- Avoidant
- Unable to concentrate
- Low in mood

## Self-care tips for anxiety

- **Talk to someone you trust** - If you experience any of the above thoughts, feelings and physical sensations it doesn't mean you definitely have an anxiety problem. But if any of them affect your everyday life, it's a good idea to tell someone you trust about how you're feeling. If you feel comfortable, there are many people to talk to in school, for example; your mentor, safe person, class teacher, school psychologist etc.
- **Give yourself time to think about your worries** – It can be hard to stop worrying when you feel anxious. You may even think that you need to keep worrying as it seems helpful – or that bad things could happen if you stopped. There are some different ways of managing the worries you may have. For example, you could: try writing any worries you have down in the day then give yourself a set amount of time to focus on your worries– so you can reassure yourself that you haven't forgotten about them. It might help if you set a time to do so, e.g. 30 minutes after this. Or if this feels too difficult to begin with, you could try setting yourself some 'worry free time' and work on increasing this throughout the day.



- **Take care over your physical health –**

Sleep is essential, as it helps to give you the energy you need to cope with difficult feelings. If you are struggling;

- ✓ Try to get into a routine
- ✓ Relax before trying to go to bed
- ✓ Make where you sleep as comfortable as possible
- ✓ Think about screen time and device settings before going to bed



Take a look at our sleeping difficulties page

It is also worth thinking about what you eat. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar up can make a difference in your mood and energy levels. Other additional tips include;

- ✓ Eating some form of breakfast if you can
- ✓ Avoid eating large amounts of food which make your blood sugar rise and fall rapidly, for e.g. as sweets, biscuits, sugary drinks
- ✓ Drink as much water as you can. It is recommended that you drink between 6–8 glasses a day
- ✓ Tea, coffee, juices and smoothies all count towards your intake (but be aware that these may also contain caffeine or sugar)



**BUT** be aware that these may also contain caffeine and sugar, which can make us feel anxious by increasing physical sensations like heart rate, shakiness, etc.

Try to do some physical activity too. Exercise is great for your mental wellbeing.

- **Try out some breathing exercises –** Learning to breathe more deeply can help you feel a lot calmer. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to keep your shoulders down and relaxed, and place your hand on your stomach – it should rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out. Counting as you breathe helps too. Start by counting 'one, two, three, four' as you breathe in and 'one, two, three, four' as you breathe out. Work out what's comfortable for you.



Check out our relaxation page for more exercises and top tips

- **Keep a diary or make notes in your phone –** It might help to make a note of what happens when you get anxious. This could help spot patterns in what triggers you or notice early signs that they are beginning to happen. You could also record what's going well. Living with anxiety can mean you think a lot about things that worry you. It's important to be kind to yourself and notice the good things that are happening too!



## Useful websites and apps

**Young Minds** for further information  
<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/anxiety/>

**Calm** is another app you can download which has strategies to help you fall asleep.

**SAM** gets you to observe and log anxious feelings; help you identify situations where you would like to reduce your such feelings and suggests some strategies that may be of use. Download on the App

**WorryTime** is an app that gets you to schedule in some thinking time in your day to think about your worries so that you don't carry it around with you 24/7.

**Headspace** is an app which provides calming mediation and mindfulness to help if you're feeling stressed or anxious. It also helps if you're having trouble sleeping or concentrating.