

# Ways to Reduce Feelings of Anxiety



Information, techniques and strategies that can be used to manage anxious feelings pulled together from various sources by Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Beam.



# breathe

Deep breathing is a powerful anxiety-reducing technique which helps the body move away from the fight-or-flight response & activates the body's relaxation response.

"Using and learning proper breathing techniques is one of the most beneficial things that can be done for both short and long term physical and emotional health."

## WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT FIGHT OR FLIGHT?

Find  
Out  
More

Watch...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc30\\_5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc30_5M)

Read...

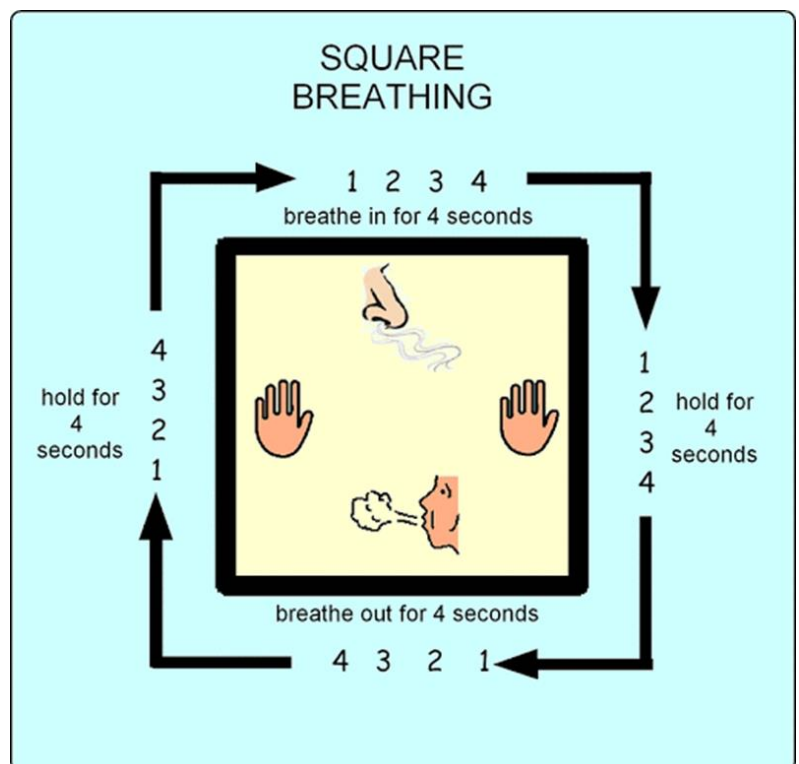
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-fight-or-flight-response-2795194>



## TECHNIQUE: SQUARE BREATHING

This simple technique can help to give a calm and relaxed feeling in your body and your mind.

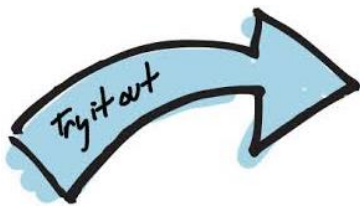
It can also help you to calm yourself down at night and make it easier to sleep.



<https://www.healthline.com/health/box-breathing#hold-your-breath-again>  
<https://psychcentral.com/lib/9-ways-to-reduce-anxiety-right-here-right-now/>

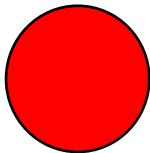


Accept that you're anxious, and that anxiety is just a feeling, like any other feeling. By reminding yourself that anxiety is simply an emotion, you can start to accept it.



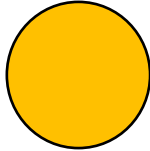
## THE TRAFFIC LIGHT TECHNIQUE

Red  
**STOP**



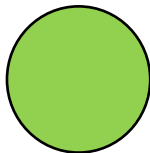
Focus on slow, steady breaths. Notice what you are thinking, feeling and doing... this is a good time to try the square breathing technique on page 1!

Amber  
**WAIT**



Don't try to control your worries... Let them be there knowing that they will not harm you.

Green  
**GO**



Watch the feeling go by, imagine it drifting away from you. Focus on the small task in front of you and what you can control right now.

## Anxiety can be helpful!

It **MOTIVATES** and **PREPARES** us to do things that we don't want to: we might worry about what will happen if we don't do something ... like revising for a test or getting ready for a presentation.

It **KEEPS US SAFE** – remember the fight or flight response from page 1!

### ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO VIEW ANXIETY...



- ❑ THIS IS A NORMAL HUMAN EMOTION
- ❑ THIS FEELING IS A SIGNAL TO SLOW DOWN & BREATHE
- ❑ THIS IS MY BODY TRYING TO KEEP ME SAFE
- ❑ MY MIND IS JUST TRYING TO PROTECT ME
- ❑ THIS FEELING IS TEMPORARY. IT WILL PASS.



Panic attacks are not dangerous, but they can feel terrifying.

#### How a panic attack develops



Panic attacks are a sudden, strong fear that you are in danger, even when there is no danger present.

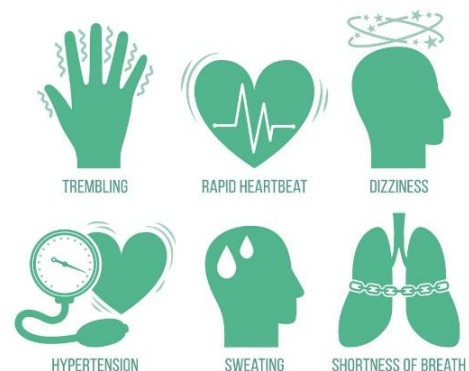
They can have a very real, very physical effect on us.

During a panic attack you might feel very afraid that you're:

- losing control
- going to faint
- having a heart attack
- going to die.

#### COMMON SYMPTOMS OF

#### PANIC ATTACK



Sometimes the more you focus on wanting a panic attack to stop, the worse it gets. Distracting your mind can help the panic pass.



## TECHNIQUE: 5 SENSES GROUNDING EXERCISE

Grounding techniques can help you feel more in control.

Use this simple method to distract and calm yourself during a panic attack.



5 things you can SEE

4 things you can FEEL

3 things you can HEAR

2 things you can SMELL

1 thing you can TASTE

#### HANDY TIP:

As with any technique it is important to practise.

Train your brain by trying this when you feel ok.

FIND MORE SUPPORT & INFO:

<https://nopanic.org.uk/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/>



# Question?

## Challenge & question your anxious thoughts.

Instead of automatically believing your anxiety, you can learn to say to yourself, "Oh, that's just my anxiety brain kicking in; it's no big deal."



THOUGHTS  
ARE NOT  
FACTS!

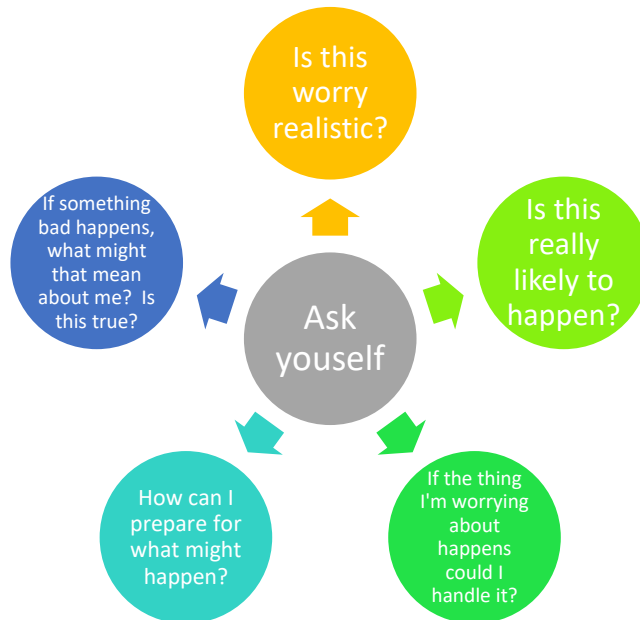
## unhelpful thinking styles

Can you recognise any of these common ones?



Find out more about unhelpful thinking styles with this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfPIkCXjfM1>



### SUGGESTION:

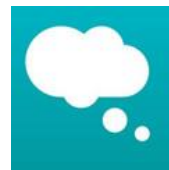
look at the free stuff listed below, all designed to help you challenge your thoughts

**FREE  
STUFF**

### WORKSHEETS

1. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/putting-thoughts-on-trial>
2. <http://www.get.gg/docs/ThoughtRecordSheet7.pdf>
3. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/challenging-anxious-thoughts>
4. <https://www.mybodytutor.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/How-To-Stop-All-Or-Nothing-Thinking-Worksheet.pdf>

### FREE APP



Catch It

Find it on your app store  
or via:

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/catch-it/>

and

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/csd/app-directory/catch-it/>



By using relaxation and visualisation you can boost your relaxation skills, and lower the fight-or-flight response that is often triggered during times of increased anxiety and panic attacks.



**PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR)** is a powerful technique with long-term benefits for stress and anxiety. When practiced regularly, the positive effects can have a lasting effect meaning reduced levels of stress and anxiety will last well beyond the practice period.

**Look at...** Therapist Aid have a script you can download:

<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/progressive-muscle-relaxation-script>

## VISUALIZATION EXERCISE: White Sandy Beach



If this one doesn't work for you, create your own! It can be somewhere you know already. Imagine what your senses would be experiencing if you were there.

Imagine that you are resting on a white sandy beach and feel safe, calm, and relaxed as you think about the following:

- Turquoise water and a clear, blue sky
- The sound of soft waves as the tide gently rolls in
- The weight of your body sinking into your beach chair
- The warmth of the sand on your feet
- A large umbrella keeping you slightly shaded, creating just the right temperature
- Relax your face and let go of any tension in your forehead, between your eyebrows, your neck, and your throat. Soften your eyes and rest. Allow your breath to slow down and match the rolling waves of the water. There is no effort to be here; spend time just taking it all in.

Once this relaxation feels complete, imagine that you get up and slowly walk away from the beach. Remember that this beautiful place is here for you whenever you need to come back. Take your time and slowly open your eyes.

From <https://www.verywellmind.com/visualization-for-relaxation-2584112>

### Relaxation for Sleep



Try the Pzizz app to help you quickly calm your mind, fall asleep, stay asleep and wake up refreshed.

Free to download – find out more:

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/pzizz/>

&

<https://pzizz.com/>

### Meditation & Mindfulness



Try the headspace app, and learn to meditate with a free Basics pack, a 10-day beginner's course that guides you through the essentials of meditation and mindfulness.

More info:

<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>

# WHAT IS SELF-COMPASSION?



## Mindfulness

Self-compassion involves recognising when we're stressed or struggling without being judgmental or over-reacting.



## Self-Kindness

Being supportive and understanding towards ourselves when we're having a hard time, rather than being harshly self-critical.



## Connectedness

Remembering that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficulties at times. We are not alone!

"Sometimes the things we say or think about ourselves can be very negative or critical and aren't things we'd say to a friend or loved one. Practicing positive self-talk can help increase our self-confidence and curb the negative or harmful thought patterns that bring us down."

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/self-talk/>

Be kind to yourself. Talk **positively** to yourself instead of criticising.

## NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

'I'm not good enough'  
'I'm a failure'  
'I can't do anything right'

## POSITIVE SELF-TALK

'I am good enough'  
'I can do better next time'  
'I can learn from my mistakes'

Our brains remember negatives more than positives, so we will always remember the times we didn't quite get it right more than the times we do.

It's easy to replay these messages in our minds and be negative towards ourselves.

Positive self-talk, as you may have guessed, is the flip of negative self-talk. It's not about being big-headed, or lying to ourselves.

It's about showing yourself some kindness and understanding for who you are and what you've been through.

<https://positivepsychology.com/positive-self-talk/>

## SELF-SOOTHING

Self-soothing is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions.



### Sight

Low lighting  
Soothing colors  
Sleeping masks  
Coloring books  
Pinterest Collages

### Touch

Soft things  
Cuddle things  
Massage  
Hot/cold shower  
Heated/weighted blanket



### Sound

Calming noise  
ASMR videos  
Nature sounds  
Guided meditations  
Binaural beats



### Smell

Aromatherapy  
Fresh air  
Candles/incense  
Comforting smells



### Taste

Strong flavors  
Warm drinks  
Eat slowly  
Nostalgic flavors



[www.blessingmanifesting.com](http://www.blessingmanifesting.com)

## MAKE IT

Create a self-soothe box, full of things that will help you relax. Some ideas for this can be found on the websites below:

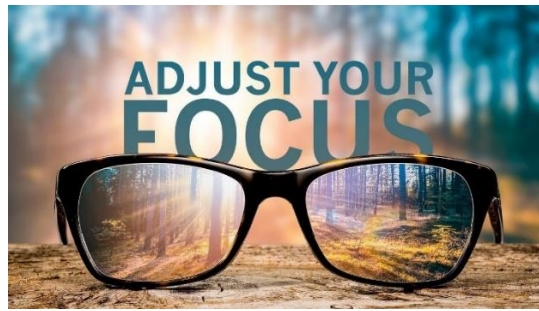
<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/emergency.htm>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/>

<https://papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Hope-box.pdf>

Or watch this YouTube clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyfgodSSdV4>



## Focus on the here & now

"The hallmark of depression and anxiety is catastrophizing—worrying about something that hasn't happened yet and might not happen at all. Worry, by its very nature, means thinking about the future—and if you hoist yourself into awareness of the present moment, worrying melts away."

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/articles/200811/the-art-now-six-steps-living-in-the-moment>



## Mindfulness

Mindfulness involves making an effort to notice what's happening in the present moment (in your mind, body and surroundings) – without judging anything.

It aims to help you:

- become more self-aware
- feel calmer and less stressed
- feel more able to choose how to respond to your thoughts and feelings
- cope with difficult or unhelpful thoughts
- be kinder towards yourself.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness/>

## When you don't know what to do...

...do the thing in front of you.



It is easy to be overwhelmed by big tasks that seem to be impossible. Try changing how you look at them.

**Split!** Divide a task into smaller, manageable tasks and aim to work through them one at a time.

**Reward!** Promise yourself a treat after.

**Permission!** What is the worst that can happen if you don't do the task now? Give yourself permission to step away.

**Ask!** Is there someone that can help you and make the task less daunting and more fun?

## catastrophize

verb [kuh-tas-truh-fahyz]

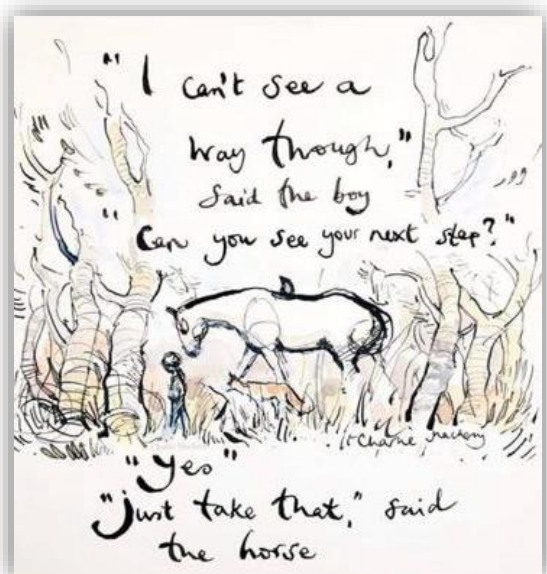
to view or talk about (an event or situation) as worse than it actually is.

In addition to the Headspace app already mentioned, there are others that are free to download (in app purchases may apply)

Calm



Stop, Breathe, Think



<https://theartofsimple.net/do-the-thing-in-front-of-you/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/impossible-task-anxiety#3>



# Want more support?

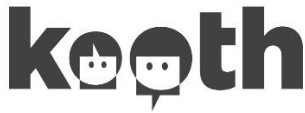
Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Beam is temporarily offering telephone-based support while the Coronavirus lockdown continues.

Contact the team on [AskBeam@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:AskBeam@childrenssociety.org.uk)

Please note that this is not an instant or emergency response service. If there is any immediate risk to life please contact Emergency services.

This email is not monitored outside of 10am–6pm Monday to Friday.

Other organisations who can offer support:



<https://www.kooth.com/>

Kooth is part of the Bee U partnership offering online mental health services for children and young people aged 10+. Moderated online forums and articles as well as text-based support.



<https://www.themix.org.uk/>

Support for children and young people aged 13–25. Online articles, blogs, as well as telephone helpline, 1-2-1 chat and crisis messenger.



<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Supporting young people's mental health with guides, information and a parents helpline.



<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Information about all aspects of mental health.



<https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

With a focus on supporting men, but open to all. Helpline and webchat available.



<https://stem4.org.uk/>

Supporting mental health in young people, with 3 free apps to download.