

Worry & Anxiety

Anxiety is normal, everyone experiences anxiety at some time.

Anxiety becomes a problem when it interferes with your day to day life.

While there are many forms of anxiety, there are some common signs and symptoms.

You might be FEELING:

- very worried or afraid most of the time
- tense and on edge
- nervous or scared
- panicky
- irritable, agitated
- worried you're going crazy
- detached from your body
- feeling like you may vomit.

You may also be EXPERIENCING:

- sleep problems (can't get to sleep, wake often)
- pounding heart
- sweating
- pins and needles'
- tummy aches, churning stomach
- lightheadedness, dizziness
- twitches, trembling
- problems concentrating
- excessive thirst.

You may be THINKING:

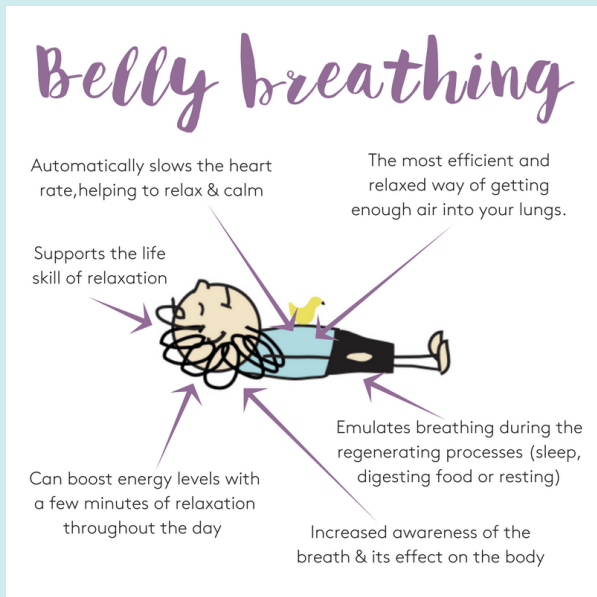
- 'everything's going to go wrong'
- 'I might die'
- 'I can't handle the way I feel'
- 'I can't focus on anything but my worries'
- 'I don't want to go out today'
- 'I can't calm myself down'.

When these constant repetitive thoughts and feelings take over, we can feel overwhelmed, lose sleep, feel exhausted, and start to avoid social situations.

If your child is feeling anxious or worried, here are some suggestions to try:

Belly Breathing

1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.



If your child is feeling anxious or worried, here are some suggestions to try:

Mindful Hand Exercises

1. Start by taking three slow breaths.
2. Rest your right hand in the palm of your left hand, with the palm facing upwards. Notice any sensations.
3. Start massaging around the wrist and bottom of your right hand with the thumb of your left hand. Notice any sensations, tickles, rough skin, dryness.
4. Move up to the centre and pad of the palm, gently circling with the thumb of your left hand. Then moving back down, start massaging up the side of your hand, moving towards your pinky finger.
5. Gently stroke each finger, one at a time, apply gentle pressure and feel the space between each finger when moving to the next one.
6. Once you have finished massaging all fingers, massage the other side of your hand, focusing on the dips and joints between fingers. Move gradually around your hand, massaging. Notice each sensation or feeling that pops up, and then move back to the massage.
7. Once you are done, repeat with the other hand.
8. Notice afterwards how you feel.



If your child is feeling anxious or worried, here are some suggestions to try:

Muscle Tense and Release

1. Focus first on your hands.
2. Clench your fists tightly for a few seconds - hold for the count of 3 seconds, counting them out - 1, 2, 3. You may wish to progressively hold for 4 seconds, then 5 or even more. Make sure you are able to do this reasonably comfortably.
3. Release the tension all in one go - make sure that the tension is released all at once with a feeling of floppiness at the end.
4. Repeat this with your hands and lower arms.
5. Repeat this with your hands and your whole arms.
6. Repeat this exercise with your feet, then feet and lower legs, then feet and whole of legs.
7. Finally hold the muscles of your entire body tense, hold for the count of 3 and at 3 release all tension from your body.

