

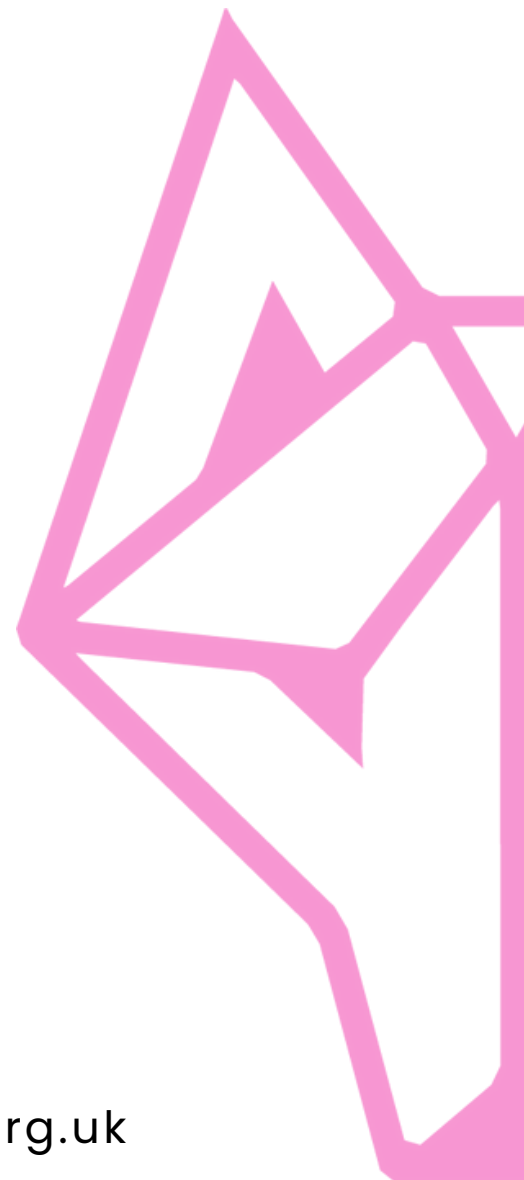


The  
Wolfpack  
Project

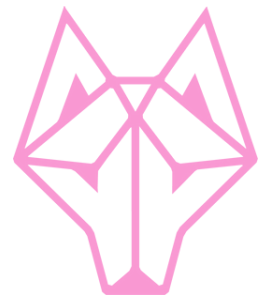
# ANXIETY TOOLKIT

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- What is anxiety?
- Signs of anxiety
- Managing anxiety
- Exercises
- Mental Health Guide



# What is Anxiety?



We are designed with a stress response that is activated when things in our environment change or something happens to us. Our bodies will prepare to:

**Fight**

**Flight**

**Freeze**

When the situation passes, our bodies will then recover.

Anxiety can trigger this response when we feel worried, tense or afraid about things that are happening or could happen in the future. Sometimes this can be helpful, as it can sharpen our decision making skills.

If it starts impacting your day-to-day living, that's when it may become problematic.

There are specific anxiety disorders which you could be diagnosed with if you experience certain things. These include:

Generalised Anxiety Disorder

Social Anxiety - anxiety triggered in social situations

Panic Disorder - experience panic attacks often

You may also experience anxiety without a formal diagnosis.



# Signs of Stress



## If you are anxious, you might feel:

- a churning feeling in your stomach
- feeling light-headed or dizzy
- pins and needles
- feeling restless or unable to sit still
- headaches, backache or other pains.
- faster breathing
- a fast, thumping or irregular heartbeat
- sweating or hot flushes
- sleep problems
- grinding your teeth, especially at night
- nausea (feeling sick)
- needing the toilet more or less often
- changes in your sex drive
- having panic attacks.

Anxiety symptoms can last for a long time, or come and go. You might find you have difficulty with day-to-day parts of your life.

It's important to remember that your body will eventually manage how it's feeling and no symptom will last forever. This is where the next couple of pages can help.

**If you're experiencing persistent or severe anxiety symptoms, it's important to seek professional help.**

# Managing anxiety

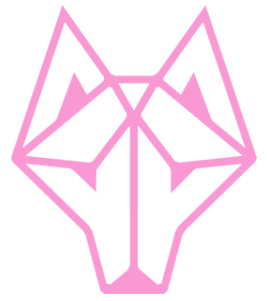


Identifying any possible triggers can help the most with knowing what can help best in that situation. Here are some universal strategies that can help in the moment:

- **Deep Breathing:** Practice deep breathing exercises to calm your mind and body.
- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Engage in mindfulness activities such as meditation, and yoga.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** This technique can help release tension and promote relaxation.
- **Challenge Negative Thoughts:** Practice cognitive restructuring by challenging negative thoughts and replacing them with more realistic and positive ones. Consider keeping a journal to track your thoughts and identify patterns.
- **Seek Support:** Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or mental health professional about your feelings and concerns. Don't hesitate to seek professional help if your anxiety is significantly impacting your daily life.
- **Limit Stressors:** Identify and limit sources of stress in your life where possible. This could include setting boundaries, delegating tasks, or avoiding triggers that exacerbate your anxiety.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as spending time in nature, listening to music, reading, or pursuing hobbies.
- **Use Relaxation Techniques:** Explore different relaxation techniques such as listening to calming music, using aromatherapy, taking a warm bath, or using guided imagery.

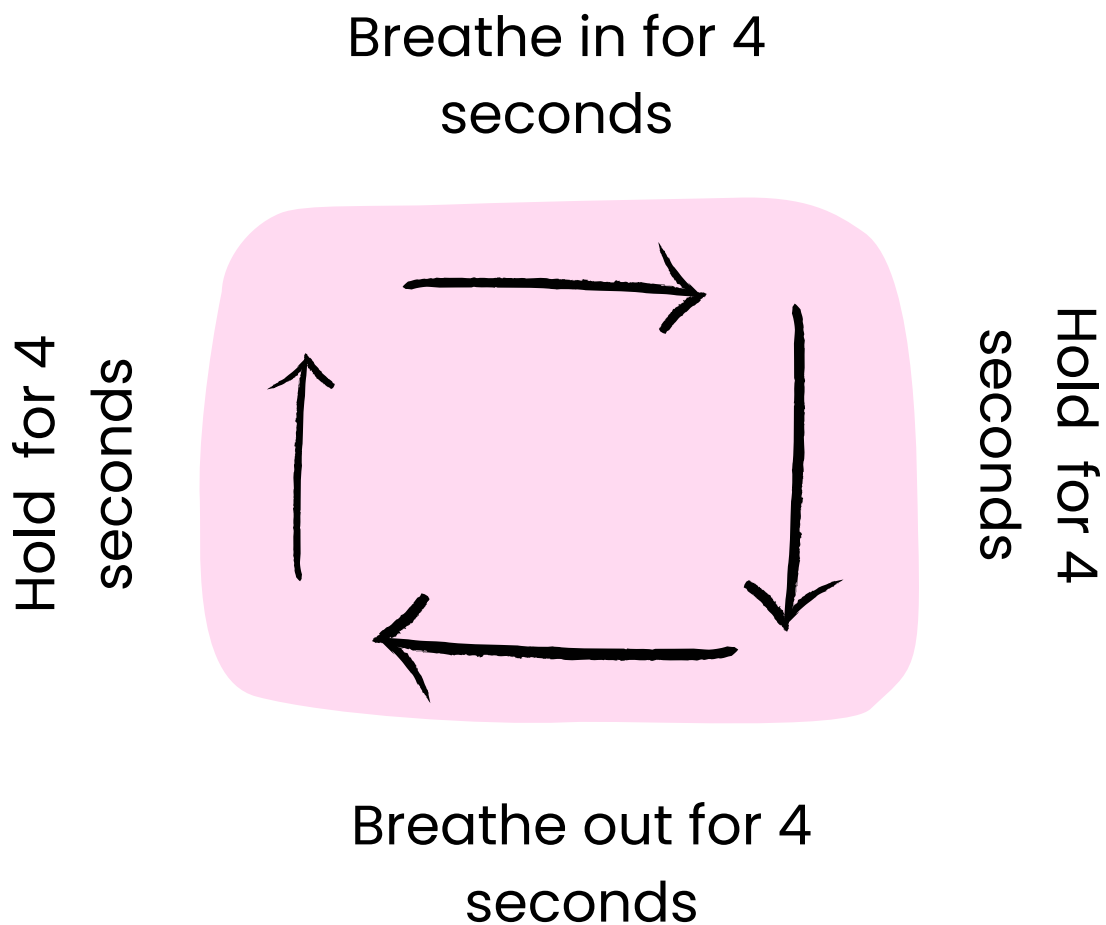
**And remember, it's always ok to ask for help.**

# Exercises



## Box Breathing

Getting into a regular breathing pattern sends a signal to our bodies to help calm it down in stressful moments. You can try with just 2 seconds as you get used to it, then gradually lengthen as you start to feel calmer.



Best practice is in through the nose, out through the mouth.

Imagine that you are blowing a balloon up inside your chest - your diaphragm should push out as you breath in, then deflate as you let the breath go.

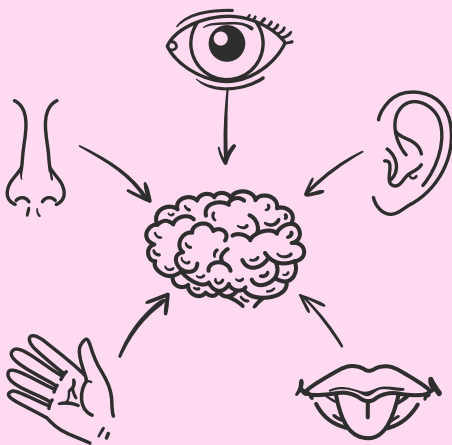
To help, put one hand on your belly button and feel your body push against it.

# Exercises



## GROUNDING OR 54321 TECHNIQUE

Explore each sense from the list to connect with yourself and the present moment, enhancing self-awareness and mindfulness.



5 things you can see

4 things you can touch

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

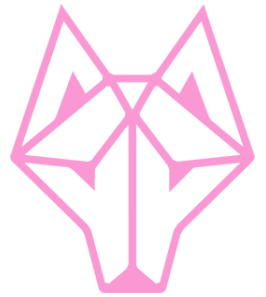
1 thing you can taste

## GROUNDING TIPS

- **Find your order:** Some senses are better than others at triggering positive thoughts or feelings, so it's worth working out what it is for you. The order is listed for ease, but you may find that going backwards helps more or randomly.
- **Be prepared:** Depending on your top senses, you may need to create your sensory pack to have with you. If you know that something like a fruit sweet helps with taste/smell, keep a few dotted about in bags, pockets etc so that it's there when needed. Textured fabric is the most soothing for me, so I have lots of soft jumpers and scarves.

Grounding technique can be used on its own or with the breathing square.

# Exercises



## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

To help relieve stress, incorporate tensing the hands as part of a full-body exercise involving gradual tension of body parts followed by a full-body stretch.

### Forehead

Raise and drop your eyebrows as far as you can

### Eyes

Tightly close your eyes, hold and release

### Jaw

Open your mouth wide to stretch the hinge muscles around your jaw

### Shoulders

Raise your shoulders as if to touch your ears, hold and release

### Arms

Stretch your arms out like a star

### Hands

Clench your fists, hold and release

### Legs

Straighten your legs as you pull your toes up towards you, hold and release

### Feet

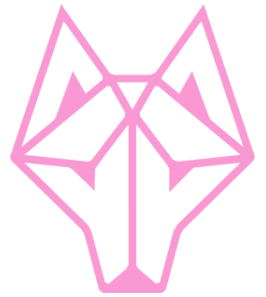
Curl your toes, hold and release



Finish with a full body stretch, reaching up above your head if you can and stretch out the back

Link with the breathing square for a relaxing practice.

# Exercises



## WORRY JAR

A simple and effective tool for managing anxiety involves writing worries on small pieces of paper and placing them in a jar. This helps acknowledge your concerns, giving them a physical form that can be contained.



You can either write your concerns in this jar diagram or place slips of paper into an actual jar.



# Mental Health Guide



Some things can really impact our anxiety levels, like sleep, diet, sensory input etc. Having a basic routine can help manage our overall wellbeing by paying attention to our basic human needs. The more we do this, the stronger the foundation when we do experience anxiety.

As a reminder, here are some quick tips to help you manage your anxiety and your wellbeing. Feel free to add your own so you have a toolbox that works for you.



Put yourself first



Keep a journal



Eat a balanced diet



Stay hydrated



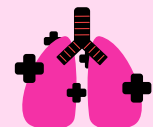
Take a walk



Reflect on the truth



Get some sunshine



Take a deep breath



Chat with a trusted adult



Create a gratitude list



Set bedtime routine



Limit screen time

