

Anxiety is a part of life that affects us all in different ways. Anxiety is uneasy and unpleasant; it can persist and often affect our daily lives. Anxiety exists as a set of bodily responses; we have an internal alarm system that is designed to protect us. This is known as 'Fight, Flight, Freeze and Flop'. This physiological reaction that occurs is in response to the presence of something that is terrifying, either physically or mentally.

This response of our hormones prepares our bodies to either run away from the threat (Flight) or stay and deal with it (Fight), to become immobile (Freeze), to be submissive when all our muscles go floppy and the mind shuts down (Flop).

There are many feelings we associate with anxiety. It is the mechanism of fight, flight, freeze and flop kicking in. We can all experience anxiety in some way, it is a natural process that we could begin to learn to nurture and have a relationship with.

Some symptoms of Anxiety are:

- Butterflies in the stomach
- Increased heart rate
- Increased muscle tension
- Tight chest
- Legs feeling like jelly
- Tingling in the hands and feet
- Heavy breathing
- Feeling Dizzy
- Difficulty in breathing
- Wanting to use the toilet more often
- Feeling nauseous and sick
- Tension headaches
- Hot flushes
- Sweating
- Dry mouth
- Shaking
- Feeling like your throat is seizing up

Ways of reducing anxiety that may work for you:

- Breathing technique – 478 breathing technique, breathe in counting till 4, hold breath counting till 7 and breathe out at the count of 8

- Ground yourself - Acknowledge 5 things you can see, acknowledge 4 things you can touch, acknowledge 3 things you can hear, acknowledge 2 things you can smell, acknowledge 1 thing you can taste.
- Write / start a journal – finding a way to express your anxiety can help it become more manageable for you.
- Talk to someone you trust
- Relaxation techniques – there are many free apps that can help you relax such as Headspace, Pacifica, Calm and Relax Melodies
- Go for a walk
- Get a mindfulness colouring book and spend some time colouring
- Drink a chamomile herbal tea – it may help reduce your anxiety, and you just might sleep better.
- Use Lavender oil/ spray - can help relax you.
- Meditation – it can help slow down your thoughts making it easier for you to manage your anxiety.
- Practise mindfulness – it encourages us to accept our emotions, allowing us a more adaptive reaction to our anxiety.
- Cut down on your caffeine – this is a stimulant that can increase anxiety further.
- Exercise – It is a great way to burn off all that energy your holding on to.
- Check your medication – some can make you feel more anxious.
- Splash some water on your face. Notice how it feels. Notice how the towel feels as you dry. Use words in your mind to describe the sensations.
- Sip a cool drink of water.
- Hold a cold can or bottle of drink in your hands. Feel the coldness, and the wetness on the outside. Note the bubbles and taste as you drink.
- If you wake during the night, remind yourself who you are, and where you are. What year is it, what age are you now? Look around the room and notice familiar objects and name them. Feel the bed you are lying on, the warmth or coolness of the air, and notice any sounds you hear.
- If you are sitting, feel the chair under you and the weight of your body and legs pressing down onto it. Notice the pressure of the chair, or floor, or table against your body and limbs.
- If you have a pet, spend some time with them.
- Listen to music – this could be relaxation music or music that makes you feel happy
- If you have a garden or some plants, tend to them for a bit.
- Say a safety statement. “My name is _____; I am safe right now. I am in the present, not in the past.”