



Forensic  
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# Managing Anxiety and Sleep



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It is understandable that many people are feeling more anxious at the moment. It is important that everyone spends some time thinking about how they can look after their emotional wellbeing during the next few weeks or months. We have come up with some ideas to help with this.

# 01

## What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling that everybody experiences. It is a normal human emotion that can be helpful at times. Anxiety **helps us** to manage situations that may be threatening or dangerous.

It is simply our body preparing to cope with a physical threat; sometimes it is called the **fight or flight** response.

If a lion walked into your room now, your mind would know this was a threat and begin to produce adrenaline. Adrenaline tells our body to prepare to fight the lion, or to run away from it.

Sometimes, our mind interprets anxious thoughts as threats. This can be **less helpful** when we are not faced with a threat (or a lion). This is when it can make us feel worse.



## Be Aware

It can help to think about how anxiety is making you feel.

Do you feel something physically in your body?

Or are you experiencing anxious thoughts?

Spend some time asking yourself these questions.

# 02

## Ways that I have managed in the past



This will not be the first time that you have had to manage feelings of anxiety. Use this space to write, draw or think of ways that work for you:

# 03

## Worries and Problems

Problems are real-world things that have happened (or could happen) and that we need to overcome.

Worries are feelings or thoughts that occur inside our body and head. They may start because of a problem, but they can take on a life of their own.

Sometimes we can get stuck in a cycle of worrying and find it difficult to break this. Quite often we worry about things that we cannot solve.



## Ask Yourself

Ask yourself the following questions to decide if you are experiencing a worry, or if it is a problem that you can solve:

- What is the real problem?
- Is it happening now?
- Can I do anything about it?

If the answers to these are 'no,' it is most likely a worry.

If the answers to the above questions are 'yes', then you are most likely to be faced with a problem and you can think about ways to resolve it.

The following exercises will help you to manage worries.

# 04

## Find ways to feel in control

Many people may be worrying about uncertainty at the moment. As humans, we like **certainty**. Our minds like to know what is going to happen, so that we can avoid anything that may feel threatening.

When we are faced with uncertainty, it is normal to feel more stressed or anxious. Sometimes, this can remind us of other times in our lives when we have felt uncertain or unsafe.

It is important to **separate** what is in your control from what is not, so that we can focus our mind space on things that we can control. Fill out the diagrams on the next page. Think about what problems you can control and focus your energy on, and which ones you can let go of. We have included some ideas.

# 04 Find ways to feel in control

## THINGS THAT I CANNOT CONTROL

How long this will last

Predicting what is going to happen

## THINGS THAT I CAN CONTROL

Washing my hands

Reducing how often I listen to the news

# 05

## Strategies for managing worry and anxiety


### Distract Yourself

When we worry or become anxious our mind can become a washing machine that spins the worry around and around. **Distraction** can be one of the easiest ways to break this cycle.

Behaviour is a really important part of distraction. If we try to tell ourselves to think differently it can be very hard to break the cycle. We may achieve it for a short period of time, but our mind quickly wanders back to the same cycle.

Force yourself to **DO** something different. When we do something that requires our concentration, our mind follows and switches to the new task. The more demanding the task the better.

**Don't be afraid** if you find it hard to concentrate on the new task at first, it can usually take some time for our mind to fully focus.

We have included some examples 

Having a conversation with someone, really listen to what they are saying and ask questions. Find out something new.



Read a book

Physical activity such as sports or exercise workouts can be effective. Further information is below.



Play a game – this can be a physical game, or one that requires mental concentration (video game)



# 06

## Use your senses

When we worry it is often about something that has happened in the past, or something that will happen in the future. Focusing on the 'here and now' can help to break this cycle. Noticing your body, senses and environment is one way to do this.

Using your senses is a good way to focus back on the present moment.

Think about

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

# 07

## Reducing physical feelings of anxiety

Anxiety can make us feel uncomfortable. Sometimes people feel tense, breathe quicker, have “butterflies”, sweaty palms, and many more symptoms. This is all because our body is producing adrenaline and preparing us to fight or run away from a threat. If you do not have a physical threat to face, it can help to reduce the adrenaline in other ways.



Anxiety

.....

Adrenaline

.....



Symptoms

# 07

## Rectangle Breathing

Sometimes when we feel anxious we begin to breathe more. This can actually increase feelings of anxiety. Use the following method to slow down your breathing. It usually takes a few minutes for breathing to return to normal.

Find a rectangle around you. This may be the doorframe, a window, your ID card or a book. Focus your attention on the rectangle. You may wish to use your finger to trace the edges, or follow the edges with your eyes.

As you go along the short edge breathe in, and breathe out as you go along the long edge. This will help you to regulate your breathing, and to breathe out longer than you breathe in.



# 07

## Physical exercise

Lots of people find physical exercise helpful when they are feeling anxious.

Exercise is an effective way of reducing the amount of adrenaline in our bodies. It also helps to distract our mind. Here is a simple exercise routine that does not require equipment.

Start by making the routine easy so that you can make it to the end. You can add extra repetitions or rounds as you become more confident.

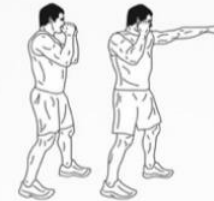
# AVENGER

DAREBEE WORKOUT © [darebee.com](http://darebee.com)

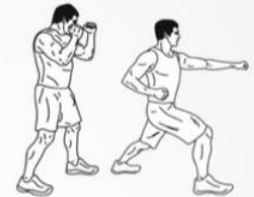
LEVEL I 3 sets LEVEL II 5 sets LEVEL III 7 sets REST up to 2 minutes



20 squats



20 punches



20 lunge punches



10 push-ups



20 shoulder taps



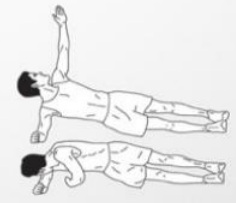
20 slow climbers



10 flutter kicks



10 sit-up punches



10 side planks rotations

# 08

## Improving your sleep

Most people will experience problems with their sleep at some point in their life, it is a **normal human experience**.

Some people find it hard to fall asleep, stay asleep or to feel refreshed after sleeping.

There are lots of reasons for having problems with sleep. Ageing, pain and bereavement can all cause problems with sleep.

Some of the most common reasons for sleep problems is feeling stressed, worried or anxious.



# 08

## Bedtime Routine

Most adults need between six and nine hours sleep every night. By working out what time you need to wake up, you can set a regular bedtime routine. Try to think of ways to help you wind down before bedtime.

 Some ideas are:

Have a warm drink (try to avoid caffeine)

Relaxation exercises

Read a book

Now include them in a bedtime routine.

Work out what time you need to wake up and count backwards.

**If you spend most of your day in your bedroom. Try to separate relaxation time from sleeping time by only lying in your bed for sleep. Once you get into bed, stay there with your eyes closed, and try to avoid getting up for a drink, or to turn the television on/off.**

## Routine

6pm:

7pm:

8pm:

9pm:

10pm:

11pm:

12am:

# 08

## Toe to head

Sometimes our thoughts can prevent us falling asleep, or falling back to sleep when we wake in the night. A helpful way to manage this is to shift your attention onto something else and allow all of your focus to be on that.



Whilst you are lying in bed, keep your eyes closed. Starting at the tip of your toes, think of all the sensations that you can feel. You might give them a wiggle and feel the mattress beneath you, or your bedsheets on top of your feet.



Now, shift your focus to your legs, and follow the same process. If your attention drifts away to other thoughts, allow it to come back to your body.



Continue this all the way up to your head, taking your time, and using all of your attention.



# 08

## A-Z of Gratitude

One way of shifting your focus to something more positive, without having to actively try to challenge negative thoughts, is to think of things that you are **grateful for and why**. If your mind is full of worries when you are trying to fall asleep, spend some time working your way through the alphabet for things that you are grateful for.

These can be simple things that we have in our life or have occurred during that day. Some letters will come easy and some will take a little more thought, but that is **good to shift our mindset**. Most people will fall asleep before they get to the tricky letters at the end.

This exercise can be done in your head as you lay on your pillow, or as a written exercise before bed. It will also help you to fall asleep in a more positive frame of mind.

We have provided some examples on the next page.





# 08

## A-Z of Gratitude

A

B

is for Brother - I had a really good conversation with him today and I'm lucky that he supports me

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

N

O

P

Q

R

S

T

U

V

W

X

Y

Z

is for Water - I am lucky to have access to clean water, many people in the world do not