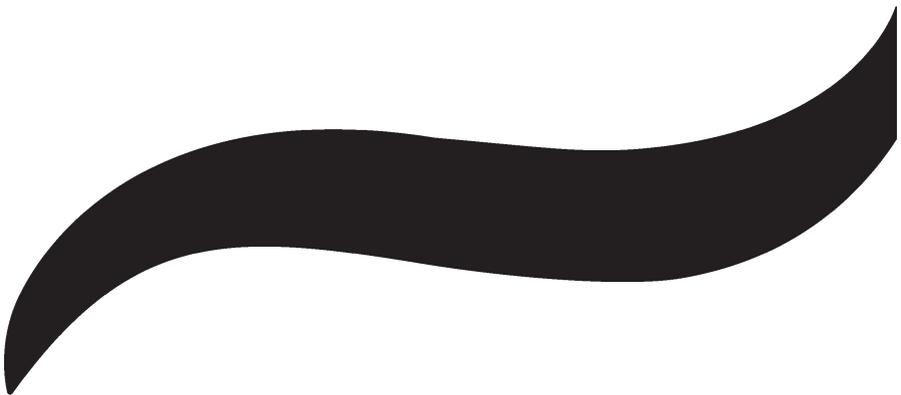


What happens to my body when I'm anxious

Information for clients



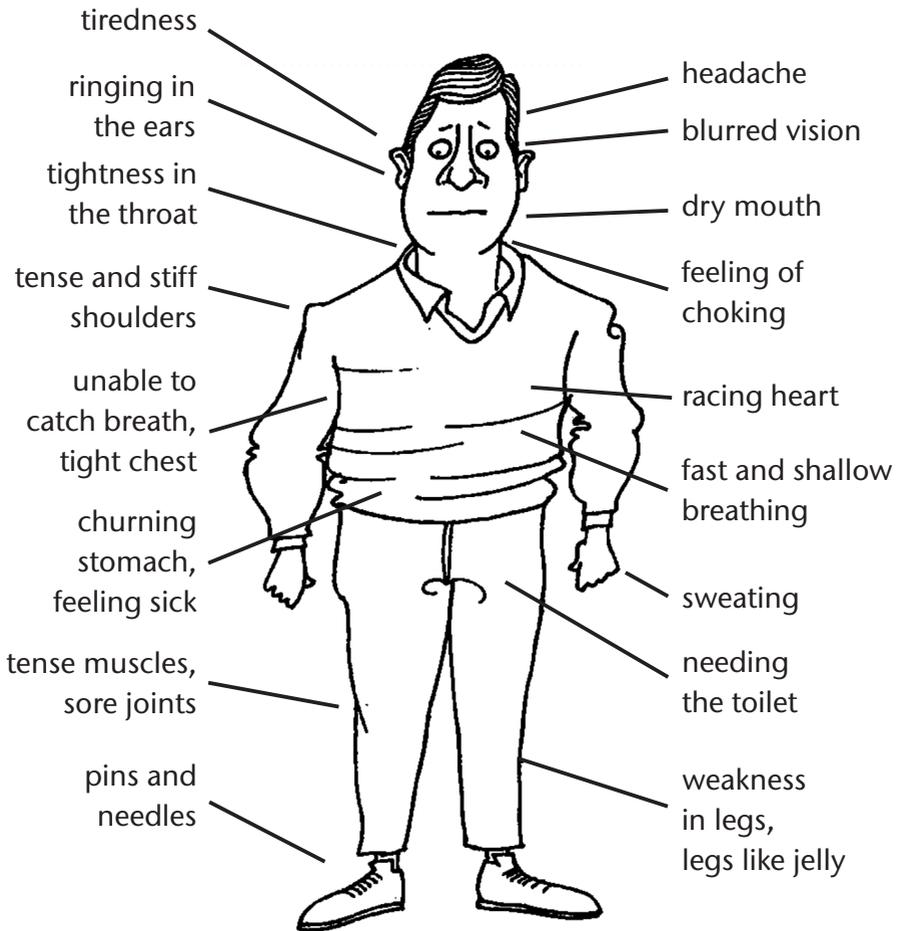
2 What happens to my body when I'm anxious?

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BODY WHEN I'M ANXIOUS?

When you are stressed, adrenalin gets released into your body. This is a chemical messenger which makes your body ready to run away or fight what it thinks is dangerous or threatening. When we were cave people, this was useful, as we were living in the wild and faced many dangers that were threatening to us. Obviously, this does not happen to us in the same way nowadays, but there are times when our body feels we are in danger and that harm might come to us: for example, if we are nearly knocked down by a car, or if climbing up a high step ladder or if hearing a sudden loud noise.

These are everyday events which may make anyone release adrenalin into his or her body. If someone is under stress or tends to worry a lot, adrenalin can be released into the body even though there is nothing really threatening or dangerous to that person. An everyday event, such as going to the shops, travelling by bus or being with a large group of people, can feel frightening and the body reacts by releasing adrenalin.

When adrenalin is released, the feelings in our body change and can make us feel horrible. If you look at the picture on page four, you may recognise some of these feelings. Most people will feel only some of these, not all.



Taken from How To Manage Anxiety (p.6) by Nicola Stuckey and Neil Millar © 2003

EVERYDAY RELAXATION

When we are tense/anxious our body system speeds up – relaxation slows us down again.

If we can learn to turn on the bodily feelings of relaxation we can turn off the symptoms of tension. You can't experience relaxation and tension at the same time.

It is helpful to try and set aside some time every day for relaxing and unwinding. If possible this should be for at least 30 minutes a day. If you live with other people you might need to train them gradually to accept that you would like to be left alone at certain times each day. For some people just managing to have 30 minutes on their own every day can make a great deal of difference.

There are a number of things you can do that you might find relaxing. You might have to experiment to see which works best for you. Why not try some of these suggestions and see what effect they have on you. There may well be some other ideas that suit you better. Try them and see what is best for you.

Relaxing activities, some suggestions:

- ❖ Have a long hot bath
- ❖ Listen to some soft music
- ❖ Lie on your bed and imagine spending a million pounds
- ❖ Go for a walk
- ❖ Cycle
- ❖ Read an easy book
- ❖ Yoga
- ❖ Swim

When you are anxious, adrenalin builds up in your body. Daily exercise helps to use up some of this adrenalin. You will feel better as a result.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT:

Useful Contacts

For information on mental services, supports, opportunities or self-help information call:

- ❖ North Lanarkshire: Well Informed 0800 073 0918
- ❖ South Lanarkshire: Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health Information Line: 0330 3000 133

For further information on mental health and well-being, visit Lanarkshire's Elament website: www.elament.org.uk

Remember, should your problems persist or you feel you need help urgently please contact your GP. The following organisations can also prove useful in and out of hours.

- ❖ **Breathing Space** - 0800 83 85 87
(Mon - Thu, 6pm - 2am; Fri 6pm - Mon 6am)
www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk
- ❖ **Samaritans** - 116 123 (24hrs) www.samaritans.org
- ❖ **NHS24** - 111 (Out of hours) www.nhs24.com
- ❖ **Healthy Working Lives** - 08452 300 323 (Local),
0800 019 2211 (National),
www.healthyworkinglives.com
- ❖ **Childline** - 0800 11 11 (24hrs) www.childline.org.uk
- ❖ **NHS Inform** - 0800 22 44 88 www.nhsinform.co.uk
- ❖ **Parentline Scotland** - 0808 800 22 22
www.children1st.org.uk/parentline
- ❖ **National Debt Line Scotland** - 0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/scotland
- ❖ **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** - 0800 027 1234

WHAT IS WELL CONNECTED?

Well Connected is a new programme in Lanarkshire, sometimes referred to as social prescribing or community referral. It makes it easier for us and people we know to take part in and benefit from activities and services that we know improve our well-being which means how we feel about ourselves and our lives. There are a number of Well Connected areas available to us and we can benefit from more than one:

- ❖ Physical activity and leisure opportunities
- ❖ Volunteering
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Arts and culture
- ❖ Benefits, welfare and debt advice
- ❖ Learning opportunities
- ❖ Stress Control Classes in communities
- ❖ Health Walks
- ❖ Mindfulness Classes.

For information on any of the above call:

- ❖ North Lanarkshire: Well Informed 0800 073 0918
- ❖ South Lanarkshire: Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health Information Line: 0330 3000 133
- ❖ Visit: www.elament.org.uk/self-help-resources/well-connected-programme.aspx

HEALTHY READING

All public libraries have a healthy reading section making it easier to access mental health and well-being leaflets, books, CDs, DVDs and web-based support. All libraries across Lanarkshire have resources to help us get the most from life such as living life to the full, sleeping better and becoming more confident or overcoming and coping with mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, stress, dementia and panic. There are also resources for all ages including supporting young people, adults and older people as well as items on positive parenting. Simply pop into your local library.

GUIDED SUPPORT:

Stress Control Classes

Stress Control classes will help develop skills and techniques to manage common issues caused by modern day living such as stress, anxiety or low confidence.

The classes are delivered in local community facilities and consist of six sessions lasting 90 minutes each. We will not need to speak about our issues during the class. Just sit back and listen about helpful stress control techniques. Feel free to bring someone along with you for support. To find your nearest class and book a place, call **0300 303 0447**.

Living Life to the Full - Online Course

Living Life to The Full is a free web-based life skills course that aims to help us tackle and respond to issues/demands which we all meet in our everyday lives. It will explore issues such as understanding why we feel the way we do, problem solving, noticing and challenging unhelpful thoughts and behaviours and anxiety control. You can register for the course at **www.lltff.com** and complete as many or as few modules as you wish.

If you feel you need additional help, the Living Life to The Full course is also available with support from self help coaches (via Action on Depression Scotland). To find out more visit **www.aod.lltffionline.co.uk**

Living Life: Guided Self Help and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - Telephone Support

Living Life is a free telephone support service for people suffering from low mood, mild to moderate depression, symptoms of anxiety or a combination of both. Trained Self-help coaches and therapists will guide us through a range of workbooks over a series of telephone sessions. For more information or to make a telephone appointment, call **0800 328 9655** (Mon–Fri 1–9pm).

NHS Lanarkshire - for local services and the latest health news visit www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk
NHS Lanarkshire General
Enquiry Line: 0300 3030 243

NHS inform - The national health information service for Scotland.
www.nhsinform.co.uk
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line on 0300 3030 243 or e-mail info2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk



www.patientopinion.org.uk

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