



**Stress and
Anxiety**

What is Stress and Anxiety and what are the symptoms?

Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. – *[Cleveland Clinic]*

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. – *[Mind]*

Some physical responses could be:

- Difficulty sleeping and eating, headaches and general upsets or infections, racing heartbeat and excessive sweating.

Psychological responses could be:

- Pessimism and symptoms of depression*, a lack of concentration, constant worry about the past, present and future and not being able to relax or enjoy life.



***Depression** is a low mood that lasts for a long time, and affects your everyday life.
- *[Mind]*

Ways to manage anxiety and stress

- 1. Adopt a healthy lifestyle.** If we eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly and ensure we get enough sleep and rest, our body is better able to cope with stress should it occur.
- 2. Know your limitations and do not take on too much.** We cause ourselves a great deal of stress because we want people to like us and don't want to let people down. Learn to be assertive so that you can say no without upsetting or offending anyone. This might mean changing your holiday plans or cancelling social gatherings.
- 3. Accept the things you cannot change.** Changing a difficult situation is not always possible. If this is the case, recognise and accept things as they are and concentrate on things you do have in your control.
- 4. Find time to talk to friends.** Friends can ease troubles and help us see things in a different way.
- 5. Try to see things differently.** Develop a positive thinking style. If something is concerning you, try to see it differently. Often talking to someone else such as a friend or colleague will help you see things from a different and less stressful perspective.
- 6. Learning to relax is also important.** It breaks the cycle of anxiety and has a very positive effect on your mind and body. Also switching off from things that make you anxious, like social media or the news.

A simple relaxation suggestion:

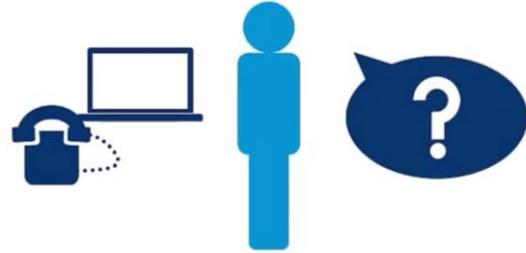
If you are feeling particularly anxious, it may take several attempts at this exercise before you feel the benefit. At first you may feel silly, but stick to it..

- Make sure you are sitting or lying down in a warm and calm environment
- Stretch out, yawn
- Allow yourself time to quieten your mind and feel at ease
- Start to breathe very slowly and become aware of rise and fall of your chest
- Begin to tense then relax your your muscles, starting from your feet working up to your legs. Whenever you feel any tension do this once or twice
- Block out any intrusive thoughts and try to make your mind blank
- As you relax, imagine your favourite peaceful place – a beach, the countryside, the desert - anything which has a positive and calming effect
- 15-20 minute relaxation like this everyday has been proven to help reduce anxiety and help our powers of resilience.

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