



# Stay Fit, Stay Healthy, Stay Happy

## Healthy Happy You!

### **It's OK, not to feel OK**

Anxiety and fear are normal responses to things we find stressful, threatening or worrying. For this reason it's not uncommon to feel anxious during the pandemic. We feel anxious because we believe we are in danger. When we detect danger in the environment, adrenaline rushes into our bloodstream to get us ready to either fight or run away. Anxiety and fear responses exist to protect us. The fight or flight response is triggered when we feel a lot of anxiety or fear. It happens whether the danger is real or not. It's all about whether we perceive the situation to be dangerous. People respond to the same stressful situation in different ways.

### **Fight or Flight**

Fight or flight is hard wired into our systems. It is our survival mechanism. Many years ago, humans relied on this response to alert them to danger in the environment – for example, animals that might attack and kill them. At this time the danger was very real and it was important to be ready to either fight it, or run away, in order to survive. Nowadays the anxiety response continues to be triggered when we perceive danger, though the danger might not be so serious and the strong physical response that follows might seem out of proportion to the situation.



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## Signs of Anxiety

- ♦ Racing heart
- ♦ Breathing quickens
- ♦ Feeling hot
- ♦ Sweating
- ♦ Tension in our muscles
- ♦ Blurring vision

We each have our own early warning signs of anxiety. We might notice anxious thoughts in our minds and physical feelings of anxiety in our bodies. This can feel really uncomfortable when we don't need to manage real danger.



## Managing Anxiety

- ♦ Use the excess energy by going for a walk or doing exercise.
- ♦ Count backwards from 1000 in multiples, for example 7.
- ♦ Focus on your breathing, for example, how it feels to breathe in and out. Imagine breathing in one colour and out another colour.
- ♦ Visualise being in a pleasant, safe and comfortable environment (e.g. being on a beach). There is a useful page to guide you through this here <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/imagery.htm>
- ♦ Listen to your favourite music. Try to pick out all the different instruments and sounds that you can hear.
- ♦ Count things that you can see that begin with a particular letter. Or think about a few items beginning with the letter "B", then move on through the alphabet.