

Anxiety, fear and panic

Most people feel anxious or scared sometimes, but if it's affecting your life there are things you can try that may help.

Support is also available if you're finding it hard to cope with anxiety, fear or panic.

Symptoms of anxiety

Anxiety can cause many different symptoms. It might affect how you feel physically, mentally and how you behave.

It's not always easy to recognise when anxiety is the reason you're feeling or acting differently.

Symptoms of a panic attack

If you experience sudden, intense anxiety and fear, it might be the symptoms of a panic attack. Other symptoms may include:

- feeling that you're losing control
- sweating, trembling or shaking
- shortness of breath or breathing very quickly
- feeling sick (nausea)

A panic attack usually lasts 5 to 30 minutes. They can be very frightening, but they're not dangerous and should not harm you.

Things you can try to help with anxiety, fear and panic

Do

- try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor. You could also contact [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org), [call: 116 123](tel:116123) or email: jo@samaritans.org if you need someone to talk to
- use calming breathing exercises
- exercise – activities such as running, walking, swimming and yoga can help you relax
- find out how to get to sleep if you're struggling to sleep
- eat a healthy diet with regular meals to keep your energy levels stable

- consider peer support, where people use their experiences to help each other.
- listen to free mental wellbeing audio guides
- search and download relaxation and mindfulness apps or online community apps from the NHS apps library.

Don't

- do not try to do everything at once – set small targets that you can easily achieve
- do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better
- do not avoid situations that make you anxious – try slowly building up time spent in worrying situations to gradually reduce anxiety
- try not to tell yourself that you're alone; most people experience anxiety or fear at some point in their life
- try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve anxiety as these can all contribute to poor mental health