

# Managing anxiety

Occasional anxiety is absolutely normal within our everyday experience. If you didn't feel anxious, ever, that would be something to worry about. So a degree of anxiety is natural. When anxiety causes us to be constantly terrified is when we need to find ways of managing it.

People with anxiety will often use safety behaviours to try and help them cope better. Examples of this may be:

- Carry a bottle of water when they are out in case they get hot and start to panic.
- Sit close to the door on a train so that they can escape if something happens.
- Use headphones to block out the sounds of other people talking.

These things may help people to tackle things they may not otherwise do. This is good, however the anxiety will never really go away.

## Good anxiety

Some people will seek out high anxiety situations, this is because experiencing high anxiety can be pleasurable. Activities such as watching a horror film, amusement parks or extreme sports, can cause people to have adrenaline rushes, which people really enjoy. The key is the enjoyment is linked to it being a time, place and activity that they have chosen.

Even though it may seem useless at times, there is a purpose for anxiety. These feelings and symptoms are a part of our innate way of dealing with stress.

Known as the fight-or-flight response, anxiety is meant to protect us from danger and allow us to react faster to emergencies.

- Anxiety Protects Us from Harm
  - It Helps Us Perform
- It Changes Our Perspective

## Bad anxiety

People would probably be less enthusiastic about something that was happening to them that was uninvited, unwanted and out of their control.

It is normal to experience anxiety when we feel we are in danger, the body will often respond with the fight, flight or freeze reaction. The 3 F's are linked to the survival of our species over the years. In situations you perceive as dangerous your body produces a whole range of chemicals, which trigger our physical symptoms.

These bodily changes are what have helped the human race to survive. This is great for objective danger like a wild animal, but not particularly helpful when the perceived danger is more of a social one.

When we are scared of something we naturally avoid it, however this can lead to use to believe more strongly that there really is something to be scared of. By avoiding it we never get the chance to test out our fears. Often we dwell on our fears and worries in order to try to make sense of them, keep ourselves safe or stop bad things happening. This is unproductive and will only increase our anxiety with improving or changing the situation.

Difficulties with anxiety are common within the general population, one in eight adults suffer from an anxiety disorder at some point in their life.

Thoughts are not facts, just because you think something will happen, is that guaranteed?

If something feels too overwhelming, try doing it for 5 minutes. Don't think any further ahead than that.