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The symptoms we experience with anxiety are real symptoms but they are not due to a real physical illness.

When the body is very anxious the Nervous system gives a signal for the body to release adrenalin. This in itself can cause some distressing physical symptoms. Some of the body is more sensitive to adrenalin than others and that is why we all may have different symptoms.

Also the body activates the fight and flight response to get us ready to face danger, to either run or fight, a very primitive reaction to danger. This means that the body is working extremely hard. Our heart will speed up to pump blood to the areas we most need it. The breathing gets faster to supply more oxygen to the muscles that are needed. The muscles tense in preparation for important action. The digestion slows down so blood may be directed to the muscles and brain. We need to be strong and alert when in danger. These are just a few examples of what happens to the body and will cause some of the symptoms.

**All anxiety symptoms can be explained by the powerful hormone adrenalin in the system, breathing wrong and the body preparing for the fight and flight response.**

**Although symptoms are unpleasant they will not harm us.**

**Listed below are some of the more common symptoms.**

- Unshakable feelings of dread, apprehension, and irrational fears
- Sense of impending doom
- Heart palpitations
- Difficulty breathing or Hyperventilating
- Dizziness and feeling faint
- Chest pains and other symptoms similar to those of a heart attack
- Pain in sternum
- Steel (like) rod in neck and shoulder
- Tense neck and shoulders
- Headache
- Can't concentrate on anything
- Insomnia
- Chills and perhaps hot flashes
- Dry mouth
- Feeling detached
- Don't know whether to sit, stand, laugh or cry.
- Stomach cramps, diarrhoea, feeling sick and other intestinal symptoms
- Clamminess
- Muscle tension, aches and pains
- Exhaustion
- Pins and needles
- Irritability
- Excessive sweating
- Anger quickly
- Frustration
- Catastrophizing
- Hypersensitive to noise
- Racing thoughts

## Hyperventilation

This can be a very frightening experience. When we are anxious we over breathe and we take too much air through the chest area than it can cope with. The balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide is disturbed and carbon dioxide levels fall. This isn't dangerous and when you calm down your breathing will return to normal. This is a normal reaction to sudden danger or excitement and the signs are easy to pick up. However when we become short of carbon dioxide we can experience some very distressing symptoms.

### What happens to the body:-

- Breathing and heart rates speed up
- Adrenalin is released into the bloodstream
- The nervous system is on 'red alert'
- Muscles tense up

If over breathing becomes a regular occurrence it can cause panic attacks and may develop into avoidance behaviours, in an attempt to control the symptoms, by controlling their environment.

### Depersonalization, Derealization, Feelings of Unreality

This is quite frightening but again it can't harm you. It can give a feeling of being spacey, not real or the earth is not real. People may feel not part of what is going on and people's voices can seem far away. People often feel they are going mad. Anxiety is called neurosis and is not a mental illness nor can become one.

When the nervous system is on alert and the anxiety is high the nervous system becomes over stimulated. It can give us very odd feelings and emotions. It can affect certain body chemistries which alters the mental state. This won't harm anyone.

When the nervous system is over stimulated it can alter feelings, thoughts and sensations because it is interconnected to the brain. When we experience high levels of anxiety the brain decides there is too much going on and goes into a self protection mode and shuts down a bit to have a break.

The breathing technique we teach is a way to calm the body down and restore normal breathing. The great thing is with practice it can be done anywhere without other people being aware.

Jenny says "I have changed my life by changing the way I breathe. I can't believe by breathing wrong it could make me feel so ill. I believed I had a serious illness. But after trying this breathing technique many of my symptoms disappeared and my anxiety came down".

Source of the above: <http://www.nopanic.org.uk/anxiety-symptoms-explained/>

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Area of body	How anxiety can affect it
Head	Mind races, increased worry levels, headaches, feel faint or light headed, feel unreal
Face	Face goes red or blushes
Eyes	Blurred vision, 'spots in front of eyes', become disorientated
Mouth	Becomes dry, speak more quickly, hard to swallow
Neck and shoulders	Become tense and stiff, muscular pain
Arms and hands	Tingling sensations, feel numb
Respiratory system	Breathing speeds up, take deeper breaths, harder to breathe
Chest	Becomes tight and painful, heart pounds / skips a beat
Lower abdomen	Stomach churns, need to rush to the toilet
Digestive system	Digestion slows, feel sick
Legs	Feel wobbly or 'like jelly'
Feet and toes	Tingling sensations, feel numb
All over	Feel hot, sweat

Space for your notes:

