

Exercises if you find anxiety is spiking

The 3,2,1 Technique

If you notice anxiety increasing, find yourself a comfy chair, sit with your feet flat on the floor and back straight (if you physically can).

Look around you and name three things you can see. Next, name three things you can hear.

Finally, name three things you can feel in your surroundings (e.g. your feet on the floor, the feel of your hands on the chair.) then, repeat the above but just do two of each this time.

Finally, repeat the above again but just one of each this time. This technique is used widely as 'grounding' for people with high anxiety and trauma reactions and can really help to bring you back into the here and now rather than away from the anxious thoughts and feelings. It can also help if you are having trouble sleeping.

Safe place

Make yourself comfortable in whatever way works for you (sitting, lying etc). Close your eyes if this feels comfortable. Take some time just paying attention to your breathing.

Don't try to change your breathing at all, just notice the constant, reliable in and out breath that keeps going whatever else is happening around you. Then, take some time to picture a place that feels safe and comforting to you. It could be a favourite holiday destination, a favourite walk, a beach or even the safe, familiarity of your childhood bedroom.

Once you have picked your image, use all of your senses to really picture your safe place and bring it to life. What can you see, hear, smell, taste and touch? Take time to really explore your safe space.

Revisit it every time you need some escapism or a route down from anxious thoughts and feelings.

Note: practising any of the above when you are at your most relaxed makes them easier to use if you have an anxiety spike (although I appreciate this is easier said than done at the moment).

There is plenty more information online with details of how the above can be differentiated for different groups e.g. young people for example.

We are all in this together