



MANAGING ANXIETY

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MANAGING ANXIETY

When we talk about anxiety in relation to revision and exams it shows us immediately that academic success isn't just about knowledge. It's about skills like relaxing and managing anxiety. These are everyday skills that will help you in your exams but also whenever you face a challenge in life. Anyone can learn these skills.

World-class athletes and elite professionals learn these skills in order to succeed in their careers. They get coaches, psychologists and hypnotherapists to teach them how to use these skills under pressure.

Managing anxiety means managing both your mind and your body.

Think of a time when you
get stressed maybe in an
exam or giving a
presentation.

Think of how this stress
affects you.

DRAW A PICTURE SHOWING HOW ANXIETY AFFECTS YOU

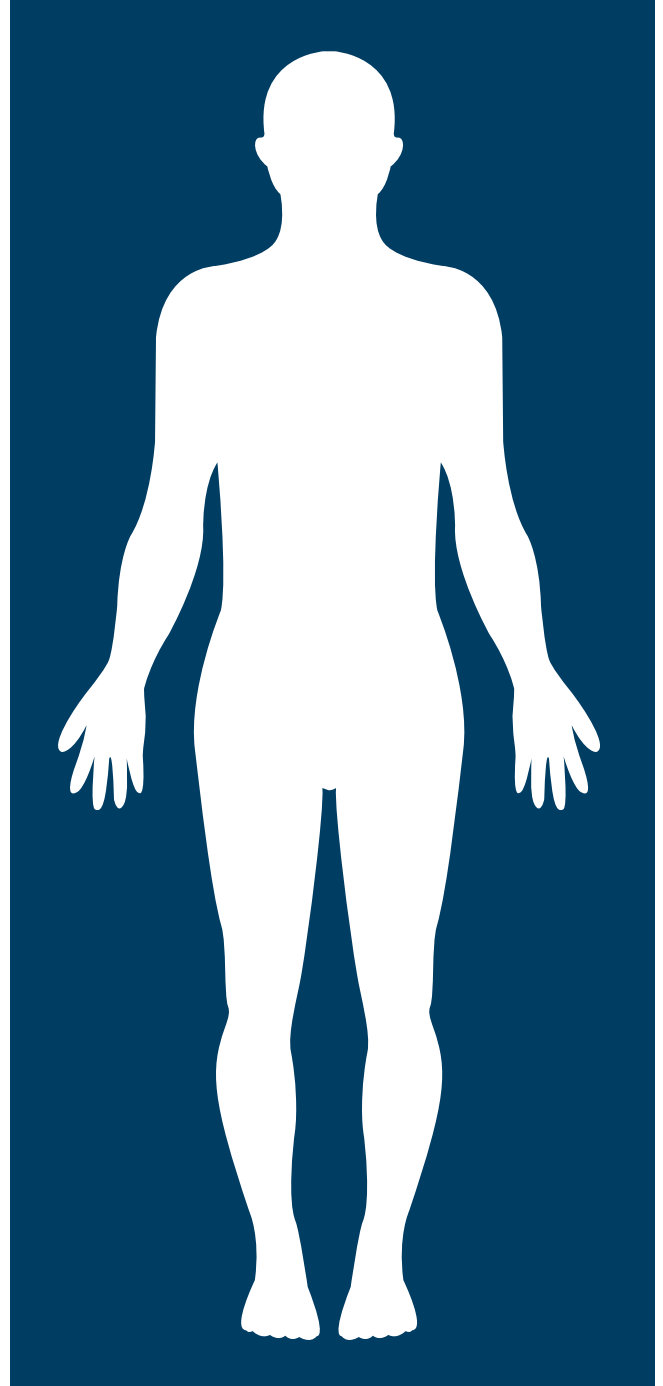


What you are drawing is the effect of adrenalin on your body and mind.

What happens to you physically?

What happens to your thinking and thoughts?

Are there some things that start before others?



The clearer you are about this, the more you will be able to catch yourself when adrenalin kicks in.

ADRENALIN

Can you explain why adrenalin is affecting your body in this way?

Adrenalin is designed to help you survive. It's the fight, flight and freeze response.

Try explaining to someone. Be really clear in your own mind about what is happening and why. Why does your heart racing help you with fight or flight?

Why do we start to shake and why does our breathing get faster?

ADRENALIN

Adrenalin is a performance enhancer

Can you think of a time when you have definitely been adrenalinised and yet you felt great? Your performance in fact was better than normal.

When was this? Describe it in detail. What were you doing and how did the adrenalin affect you?

ADRENALIN

Why do you think you felt so good on this occasion even with adrenalin in your system?

How did you make that adrenalin work for you?
Why didn't it overwhelm you and negatively affect your performance?

How can you use this past positive experience of adrenalin to help yourself when you get anxious

What can you do to help yourself in an exam if you get adrenalised?

HOW WE MANAGE ANXIETY

Step 1: Understanding Adrenalin

Anxiety triggers adrenalin. It's a hormone and a chemical that kicks in when we have fearful or anxious thoughts. These thoughts may be true or untrue, it doesn't matter. If we feel anxious then adrenalin kicks in.

What's really happening is your body is ready for a survival level event. It's been triggered by an anxious thought and it's ready to respond to anything through physical action. However, you may be in an exam where you need to sit still and think.



HOW WE MANAGE ANXIETY

Step 2: Know that nothing's broken!

If you can't think and you're going blank, if you're losing focus, if you're sweating or shaking – it's easy to think that everything is going badly wrong! Something must be broken!

But actually, it just means that you have **too much adrenalin** flying around your system.

Understanding what is happening to your body and knowing that nothing is broken is the first mind skill to changing it. **Understanding what's happening calms us down. Our mind calms and so our body calms.**



HOW WE MANAGE ANXIETY

Step 3: Calm your body down

Your brain is anxious so your body has become adrenalised. But you can calm the body down and the brain will start to calm down. Calming your body down will calm your mind down and get your brain back ‘on-line’ so that you can think clearly again.

This is a technique that many people don’t understand.

Calm the body and you calm the mind. Calm the mind and you calm the body.



HOW WE MANAGE ANXIETY

Step 4: It takes practice

Don't expect yourself to be able to do this for the first time in an exam. It takes practice for the body to know it can calm itself down even under stress.

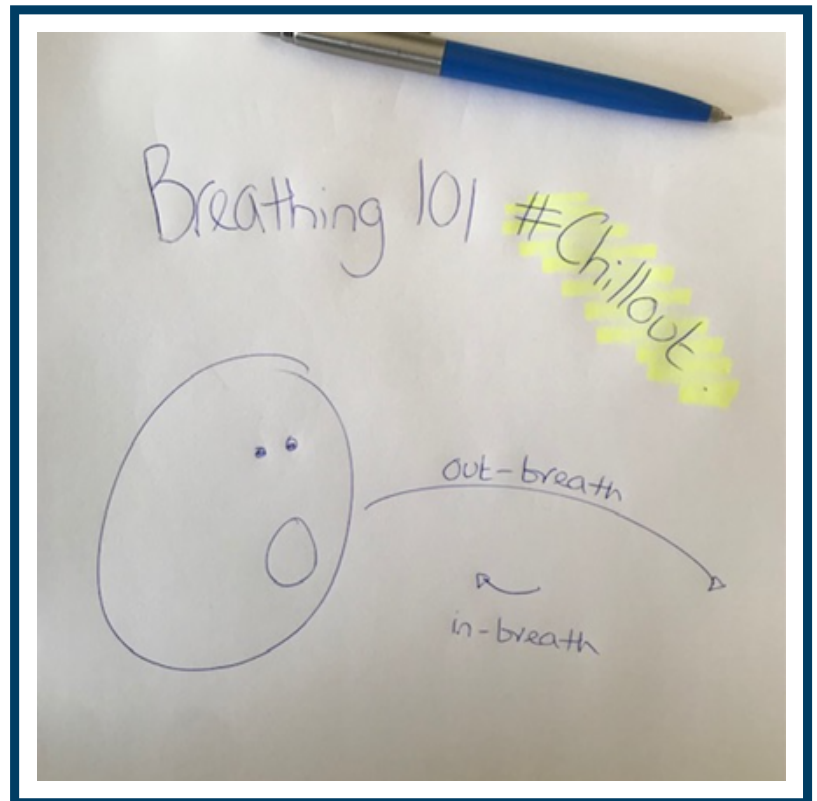
Top tips for calming your body down include:

Breathing: Take a longer out-breath than in-breath. This switches the body into relaxation mode. It's that simple.

Don't hold your breath, just take a quick breath in and let it out slowly. Do it a few times. Feel yourself start to calm down and your thinking start to gear up.

Get rid of tension: Either shake or stretch out your arms. You can do this anywhere, even in an exam and it doesn't look weird.

Use the Power Pose: This is the cleverest technique because you can use it before stressful events to change your body and brain chemistry. Check out the link to the TED talk on the next page.



HOW WE MANAGE ANXIETY

Step 5: Relax in your sleep

Most people don't realise how easy it is to practice relaxation. Practice it as you fall asleep. You will have a better sleep while you learn to relax.

Look up on YouTube using keywords like:

- Sleep relaxation
- Guided relaxation
- Sleep hypnosis



CHECK OUT THIS TED TALK



'YOUR BODY LANGUAGE MAY SHAPE WHO YOU ARE | AMY CUDDY'

Amy tells us about her own experience with confidence and explains how her research has shown that our body posture effects the way we feel, our confidence and also the way other people see us. And best of all, two minutes is all it takes to change our brain chemistry and boost our confidence. This is perfect preparation before stressful events like exams, interviews and presentations.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.