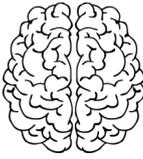


# Recognising Anxiety

1



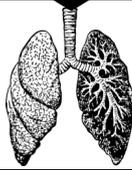
The amygdala detects 'threat' which activates the hypothalamus

2



This releases adrenaline and cortisol resulting in a number of bodily changes such as increased heart rate

3



More changes occur such as increased blood pressure, quicker breathing and the liver converts glycogen to glucose for energy.

## The nervous system's job!

Anxiety has evolved as an automatic survival mechanism meaning that it is always on the look out for potential danger. Ultimately, anxiety keeps us safe. This is great until it stops us living a meaningful life. We have all heard of the fight, flight, freeze or appease responses. These are normal biological responses to threat. Your brain is trying to protect you. It becomes problematic when the nervous system triggers these unneeded reactions. The first step is to realise when anxiety is speaking as opposed to real threat. For instance, anxiety may make us feel like we need to urgently do something. When anxiety has been running on autopilot for so long don't expect to feel better over night. Changing habits takes time. But make an conscious effortful decision to recognise and work with anxiety.

## Notice, Recognise and Label Anxiety

Recognise that this feeling is not harmful, nor does it mean our thoughts are true. Anxiety is just an automatic response trying to keep us safe. It doesn't mean we need to do anything! The first step is to 'recognise the urgency'. Notice anxiety and label it out loud. For example, tell yourself *'This is anxiety, again! I know that I am safe and I do not need to do anything.'*

## More Physiological Responses

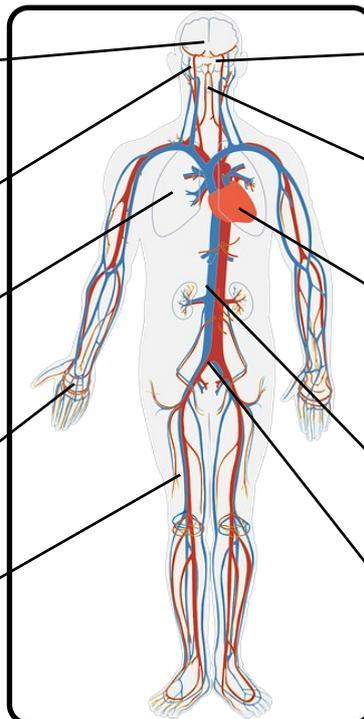
Thoughts become rapid. This helps us to make quick decisions yet we also hyper focus on our problems

Feeling unreal or disconnected from reality. Due to physiological changes

Breathing is quicker. Lungs can take in more oxygen for muscles

Hands become cold. Blood is needed in the muscles for fight or flight

Muscle tension. Legs may feel wobbly or may tremble due to bodily changes



Feeling lightheaded or dizzy.

Increased oxygen intake that is not used up in the muscles

Mouth becomes dry. Digestion shuts down as energy is needed in muscles

Heart rate becomes rapid. Adrenaline is released and oxygen can be pumped around the body quickly

Stomach feels nauseous. Blood moves away towards muscles

Bladder relaxes. Due to release in hormones