



Mental Wellness 101

Contents

Coping With Stress	3
What is Anxiety?	4
What is Depression?	6
The Cognitive Triangle	7
Unhelpful Thinking Styles	8
10 Ways to Untwist your Thinking	9
5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique	10
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	11
The Feelings List	12
Resources	13, 14

coping with stress



Stress and Stressors

Stress is something that is part of normal life, in that it is experienced by everyone from time-to-time. However, some people suffer from stress which is so frequent or so severe that it can seriously impact on their quality of life. Stress can come from a huge range of sources (*stressors*), such as:

- ◇ Relationships with others
- ◇ Work-related issues
- ◇ Study demands
- ◇ Coping with illness
- ◇ Life changes, such as marriage, retirement, divorce
- ◇ Day-to-day activities and tasks
- ◇ Positive events, such as organising holidays or parties
- ◇ Juggling many roles or tasks at the same time



Some people are aware of what tends to trigger their stress, and this increases their ability to either prevent stress or to handle it more effectively. Many others are less able to deal with stress, and identifying stressors is a key step in this. If you often experience stress, take some time to consider what tends to set it off for you.

Symptoms of Stress

Some people do not even notice that they are stressed until symptoms begin to occur, including:

- ◇ Irritability or moodiness
- ◇ Interrupted sleep
- ◇ Worrying or feeling of anxiety
- ◇ Back and neck pain
- ◇ Frequent headaches, minor to migraine
- ◇ Upset stomach
- ◇ Increased blood pressure
- ◇ Changes in appetite
- ◇ Rashes or skin breakouts
- ◇ Chest pains
- ◇ Making existing physical problems worse
- ◇ More susceptible to cold/flu and slower recovery

These symptoms reduce quality of life, and people suffering from stress may notice that work performance or relationships suffer more as a result. You may be able to use some the strategies listed here, or you may find it useful to consult a professional for more help.

Stress Management Tips

- 1) **Identify your stressors**, and see if there are some things within your control to manage better. Some things will be beyond your control, for example if you work a job that is based on working towards deadlines then you can't change this without changing jobs. But perhaps you can control some aspects, such as scheduling to have at least a short lunch break each day, or to go to bed earlier so that you have more energy to cope with the daytime.
- 2) Build **regular exercise** into your life - as well as being part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle and giving you more energy, many people find that working out at the gym or playing sport helps them to unwind.
- 3) Make sure that you **eat and sleep well**.
- 4) **Take time out** for family, friends and recreational activities. Most of us know that this is important but we do not all do it. If you find it hard to make time for this, perhaps you need to take deliberate steps to have time out, such as set aside one evening a week where you meet up with friends or enjoy a hobby, or set aside one day of the weekend for relaxing at home.
- 5) **Problem-solving techniques** can be a useful way of clarifying the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and then choosing one to put into action after listing the pros and cons of each option. See the handout *Problem Solving* for more details about this.
- 6) **Learn calming techniques** such as controlled breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, to train your mind and body to become more relaxed. These techniques require practice but can be helpful with regular use. See handouts *Calming Technique* and *Progressive Muscle Relaxation*.
- 7) You may wish to speak to a professional about **assertiveness training and communication skills** which can help you to deal with challenging situations more effectively, thereby reducing stress. See the handout *Assertive Communication*.
- 8) Last but definitely not least, consider whether there is **negative thinking** which is contributing to your stress. Negative thinking can make us worry more than is necessary, increasing stress, and generally does not motivate us to take positive actions. See the handouts *Thinking & Feeling*, *Analysing Your Thinking* and *Changing Your Thinking*.



what is anxiety?

Many people experiencing the symptoms of anxiety can begin to wonder if there is something really wrong with them. One typical fear is that they might be going crazy. Unfortunately, the reactions and comments from other people such as, 'just get yourself together' are not very helpful.

Although you might feel alone in your struggle against anxious moods, the reality is that many people experience these moods either from time to time, or on a more regular basis. In fact, it is estimated that 1 in every 5 experience significantly anxious mood at some time in their life.

Anxiety can effect any kind of person at any stage of their life, whether they are an introvert or an extrovert, socially active or shy, youthful or elderly, male or female, wealthy or poor. Whatever your distinction, you can become anxious. That means that any person you know is also fair game. So remember, you are not alone.

Understanding Anxiety

Feeling afraid is very much a part of the experience of being human. It occurs in response to realistically anticipated danger and therefore is a survival instinct. For example, if a ferocious animal confronted us it is likely that we would respond with fear. This response is important because it initiates a whole series of physical and behavioural changes that ultimately serve to protect us. In this example, when confronted by an animal, the feeling of fear would probably lead us to either run for our lives or become sufficiently 'pumped up' to physically defend ourselves. As you can see from this example, the experience of fear is part of a process of survival.



The experience of anxiety is very similar to the experience of fear - the main difference is that anxiety occurs in the absence of real danger. That is, the individual may think that they are in danger but the reality is that they are not. To illustrate this, think of the anxiety one may feel when walking down a poorly lit alley. The individual may feel anxious because they perceive some potential danger. This may not mean that there is any real danger in walking down this particular alley, but what causes the experience of anxiety is that the person believes that they are in danger. Therefore, the experience of anxiety and fear are basically the same except that in the case of anxiety, there may not be any actual danger - the person just thinks there is.

Fight/Flight Response



It is important to fully understand the way our bodies react to threat or danger, whether real or imagined. When a person is in danger, or believes that they are in danger a number of changes occur. This response has been named the fight/flight response. As previously explained, when confronted with danger we will typically

flee from the situation, or stand and fight. The main purpose of the fight/flight response is to protect the individual. It is therefore important to remember that the experience of anxiety is not in itself, harmful. When a person's fight/flight response is activated, three major systems are affected. These are the physical, cognitive and behavioural systems.

Physical System

When we believe that we are in danger, our whole physical system undergoes some major, temporary changes designed to enhance our ability to either run away, or stand and be ready to fight. Physically, as soon as danger is perceived, the brain sends a message to our autonomic nervous system. Our autonomic nervous system has two sections: the sympathetic branch and the parasympathetic branch. These two sections control the physical changes that occur in the fight/flight response. The sympathetic branch is the part that activates the various areas of the body to be ready for action. When the sympathetic branch is activated, it includes all areas of the body, and therefore, the person experiences physical changes from head to toe.

To get things moving, the sympathetic nervous system releases two chemicals from the adrenal glands on the kidneys. These chemicals are called adrenalin and noradrenalin and are basically messengers that serve to maintain the physical changes for a sufficient amount of time.

So what are these physical changes that the sympathetic mechanism produces when you are anxious?

1. An increase in heart rate and strength of beat

One physical change that is quite noticeable to the person experiencing the fight/flight response, is an increase in heart rate and the strength of heartbeat. An increase in heart rate enables blood to be pumped around the body faster, so that oxygen gets delivered more promptly to the various tissues of the body and waste products can be efficiently eliminated.

2. A redistribution of blood from areas that aren't as vital to those that are

There is also a change in blood flow - away from places where it is not needed (such as skin, fingers and toes) towards the places it is likely to be needed (large organs and muscles). This is very useful because if we were attacked and cut in some way we would be less likely to bleed to death, as the blood will be with the vital organs. This physical change results in the skin looking pale and feeling cold, and also in the experience of cold, numb and tingling fingers and toes.

3. An increase in the rate and depth of breathing

As well as changes to heart rate, there are also changes to the speed and depth of breathing. This is very important, as it provides the tissues with the extra amount of oxygen required to prepare for action. The feelings produced by this increase in breathing can include breathlessness, choking or smothering feelings, tightness and pain in the chest, and sighing and yawning. One of the main



side effects of this increase in breathing is that the blood supply to the head is actually decreased. This is not dangerous but can produce a collection of unpleasant symptoms, including: dizziness, light-headedness, blurred vision, confusion, feelings of unreality and hot flushes.

4. An increase in sweating

Another physical change in the fight/flight response is an increase in sweating. This causes the body to become more slippery, making it harder for a predator to grab, and also cooling the body and thus preventing it from overheating.

5. Widening of the pupils of the eyes

One effect of the fight/flight response that people are often unaware of, is that the pupils widen to let in more light, which may result in the experience of blurred vision, spots before the eyes, or just a sense that the light is too bright. This change enables the person to more effectively use their sight to identify any hidden dangers such as something lurking in the shadows.

6. Decreased activity of the digestive system

The decreased activity of the digestive system allows more energy to be diverted to systems more immediately related to fight or flight. The range of effects you might notice as a result of this body change are a decrease in salivation, resulting in a dry mouth and decreased activity in the digestive system, often producing feelings of nausea, a heavy stomach or even constipation.

7. Muscle tension

Finally, many of the muscle groups tense up in preparation for fight/flight and this results in subjective feelings of tension, sometimes resulting in aches and pains and trembling and shaking. The whole physical process is a comprehensive one that often leaves the individual feeling quite exhausted.

Behavioural System

As already mentioned, the two main behaviours associated with fear and anxiety are to either fight or flee. Therefore, the overwhelming urges associated with this response are those of aggression and a desire to escape, wherever you are. Often this is not possible (due to social constraints) and so people often express the urges through behaviours such as foot tapping, pacing or snapping at people.

Cognitive System

As the main objective of the fight/flight response is to alert the person to the possible existence of danger, one major cognitive change is that the individual begins to shift their attention to the surroundings to search for potential threat. This accounts for the difficulty in concentrating that people who are anxious experience. This is a normal and important part of the fight/flight response as its purpose is to stop you from attending to your ongoing chores and to permit you to scan your surroundings for possible danger. Sometimes an obvious threat cannot be found. Unfortunately, most of us cannot accept not having an explanation for something and end up searching within themselves for an explanation. This often results in people thinking that there is something wrong with them - they must be going crazy or dying.

Restoration of the Systems

Once the immediate danger has abated, the body begins a process of restoration back to a more relaxed state. This is once again controlled by the autonomic nervous system. This time it instructs the parasympathetic branch to begin the process



of counteracting the sympathetic branch. As a result, the heart rate begins to slow, breathing rate slows, the body's temperature begins to lower and the muscles begin to relax. Part of the process of restoration is that the systems do not return to normal straight away. Some arousal continues and this is for a very good reason. In primitive times, if a wild animal confronted us it would be foolish to relax and be off guard as soon as the animal began to back off. The chances of danger continuing in such a case causes the body to remain prepared for the need to once again face danger. Therefore, some residual effects of the fight/flight response remain for some time and only gradually taper off. This can leave the individual feeling 'keyed up' for some time afterwards. This helps to understand why it is that people can feel anxious for ongoing periods of time when no obvious stressor is present.

What Causes Anxiety?

The combination of factors which result in an individual developing an anxiety disorder differ from person to person. However, there are some major factors that have been identified, which may be common to sufferers. These factors can be effectively divided into biological and psychological causes.

Biological Factors

A genetic factor has been linked to the development of anxiety disorders. For example, in obsessive-compulsive disorder, about 20% of first-degree relatives have also suffered from the condition. Overall, based on family studies, it has been suggested that individuals may inherit a vulnerability to developing an anxiety disorder.

Psychological Factors

Having this genetic vulnerability does not imply that those individuals will develop an anxiety disorder. A great deal depends on the lifestyle of that person, the types of life stressors they have encountered and their early learning. For example, if we were taught to fear certain neutral situations as a child it can become difficult to extinguish these learned patterns of behaviour. Therefore, we may have developed certain patterns of thinking and behaving which contribute to the development of an anxiety disorder.

Summary

As you can see from this description of the fight/flight response, anxiety is an important emotion that serves to protect us from harm. For some people the fight/flight response becomes activated in situations where no real danger is present. The types of situations vary greatly from person to person. For example, simply anticipating poor performance on an examination can be enough to activate the fight/flight response. An anxiety disorder is usually diagnosed when a person cannot manage to function adequately in their daily life due to the frequency and severity of the symptoms of anxiety. It is important to keep in mind however, that some anxiety is functional, enabling us to get to work on time, meet demands, cross busy streets and remain aware of our surroundings.

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what is depression?

Many people experiencing the symptoms of depression might begin to wonder if there is something really wrong with them. One typical fear is that they might be going crazy. Unfortunately, the reactions and comments from other people such as, "Just get yourself together!" are not very helpful.

Although you might feel alone in your struggle against depressive moods, the reality is that many people experience these moods from time to time, or even regularly. In fact, it is estimated that 1 in every 4 people experience significantly depressed mood at some time in their life.

Depression can affect any kind of person at any stage of their life. You may be an introvert or an extrovert, socially active or shy, youthful or elderly, male or female, wealthy or poor. Whatever your distinction, you can become depressed. That means that any person you know is fair game. So remember, you are not alone.

Depression is a word used in everyday language to describe a number of feelings, including sadness, frustration, disappointment and sometimes lethargy. However, in clinical practice, the term "Depression" or "Major Depression" differs from these everyday 'down' periods in three main ways:



- Major Depression is more intense
- Major Depression lasts longer (two weeks or more)
- Major Depression significantly interferes with effective day-to-day functioning

In this handout, the word **depression** is referring to Major Depression or a clinical depression.

Depression as a Syndrome

A syndrome is a collection of events, behaviours, or feelings that often go together. The depression syndrome is a collection of feelings and behaviours that have been found to characterise depressed people as a group. You may find that you experience all or some of these feelings and behaviours. There are many individual differences to the number of symptoms and the extent to which different symptoms are experienced. These symptoms are described in this next section.

Mood

Depression is considered to be a disorder of mood. Individuals who are depressed, describe low mood that has persisted for longer than two weeks. In mild forms of depression, individuals may not feel bad all day but still

describe a dismal outlook and a sense of gloom. Their mood may lift with a positive experience, but fall again with even a minor disappointment. In severe depression, a low mood could persist throughout the day, failing to lift even when pleasant things occur. The low mood may fluctuate during the day – it may be worse in the morning and relatively better in the afternoon. This is called 'diurnal variation,' which often accompanies a more severe type of depression.



In addition to sadness, another mood common to depression is anxiety.

Thinking

Individuals who are depressed think in certain ways, and this thinking is an essential feature of depression. It is as much a key symptom of depression as mood or physical symptoms. Those who are depressed tend to see themselves in a negative light. They dwell on how bad they feel, how the world is full of difficulties, how hopeless the future seems and how things might never get better. People who are depressed often have a sense of guilt, blaming themselves for everything, including the fact they think negatively. Often their self-esteem and self-confidence become very low.

Physical

Some people experience physical symptoms of depression.

- Sleep patterns could change. Some people have difficulty falling asleep, or have interrupted sleep, others sleep more and have difficulty staying awake
- Appetite may decline and weight loss occurs, while others eat more than usual and thus gain weight
- Sexual interest may decline
- Energy levels may fall, as does motivation to carry out everyday activities. Depressed individuals may stop doing the things they used to enjoy because they feel unmotivated or lethargic

Interacting with Other People

Many depressed people express concern about their personal relationships. They may become unhappy and dissatisfied with their family, and other close, relationships. They may feel shy and anxious when they are with other people, especially in a group. They may feel lonely and isolated, yet at the same time, are unwilling or unable to reach out to others, even when they have the opportunities for doing so.

The Cognitive Triangle

Thoughts

What we **THINK** affects
how we act and feel.



Cognitive Triangle

Feelings

What we **FEEL** affects
what we think and do.

Behaviors

What we **DO** affects
how we think and feel.

unhelpful thinking styles

When a person experiences an unhelpful emotion (eg., depression or anxiety), it is usually preceded by a number of unhelpful self-statements and thoughts. Often there is a pattern to such thoughts and we call these, “unhelpful thinking styles”. One of the things we have noticed is that people use unhelpful thinking styles as an automatic habit. It is something that happens out of our awareness. However, when a person consistently and constantly uses some of these styles of thinking, they can often cause themselves a great deal of emotional distress. This information sheet describes a number of “unhelpful thinking styles”. As you read through them, you might notice some thinking patterns and styles that you use consistently. Some of these styles might sound similar to one another. They are not meant to be distinct categories but to help you see if there is a kind of pattern to your thoughts.

Mental Filter:

This thinking style involves a “filtering in” and “filtering out” process - a sort of “tunnel vision,” focusing on only one part of a situation and ignoring the rest. Usually this means looking at the negative parts of a situation and forgetting the positive parts, and the whole picture is coloured by what may be a single negative detail.

Jumping to Conclusions:

We jump to conclusions when we assume that we know what someone else is thinking (mind reading) and when we make predictions about what is going to happen in the future (predictive thinking).



Personalisation:

This involves blaming yourself for everything that goes wrong or could go wrong, even when you may only be partly responsible or not responsible at all. You might be taking 100% responsibility for the occurrence of external events.

Catastrophising:

Catastrophising occurs when we “blow things out of proportion”, and we view the situation as terrible, awful, dreadful, and horrible, even though the reality is that the problem itself is quite small.

Black & White Thinking:

This thinking style involves seeing only one extreme or the other. You are either wrong or right, good or bad and so on. There are no in-betweens or shades of gray.

Shoulding and Musting:

Sometimes by saying “I should ...” or “I must ...” you can put unreasonable demands or pressure on yourself and others. Although these statements are not always unhelpful (eg “I should not get drunk and drive home”), they can sometimes create unrealistic expectations.

Overgeneralisation:

When we overgeneralise, we take one instance in the past or present, and impose it on all current or future situations. If we say “You always ...” or “Everyone ...”, or “I never...” then we are probably overgeneralising.

Labelling:

We label ourselves and others when we make global statements based on behaviour in specific situations. We might use this label even though there are many more examples that aren’t consistent with that label.



Emotional Reasoning:

This thinking style involves basing your view of situations or yourself on the way you are feeling. For example, the only evidence that something bad is going to happen is that you feel like something bad is going to happen.

Magnification and Minimisation:

In this thinking style, you magnify the positive attributes of other people and minimise your own positive attributes. It’s as though you’re explaining away your own positive characteristics.

Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

Identify the Distortion: Write down your negative thoughts so you can see which of the ten cognitive distortions you're involved in. This will make it easier to think about the problem in a more realistic and balanced way.

Examine the Evidence: Instead of assuming your negative thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it. Thoughts are very rarely the pure, unadulterated truth. For example, if you feel you never do anything right, you could list several things you have done successfully.

The Double Standard Method: Instead of putting yourself down in a harsh condemning way, talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you would talk to a friend with a similar problem.

The Experimental Technique: Do an experiment to test the validity of your negative thought. For example, if during a panic attack you become terrified that you're about to die of a heart attack, you could jog or run up and down several flights of stairs. This will prove that your heart is healthy and strong.

Thinking in Shades of Grey: Although this method might sound drab, the effects can be illuminating. Instead of thinking about your problems in all-or-nothing extremes, evaluate things on a range of 0 – 100. For example, when things don't work out as well as you hoped, think about the experience as a partial success rather than a complete failure. See what you can learn from the situation.

The Survey Method: Ask people questions to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic. For example, if you believe that public speaking anxiety is abnormal and shameful, ask several friends if they've ever felt nervous before giving a talk.

Define Terms When you label yourself "inferior" or "a loser" or "an idiot," ask, what is the definition of a 'loser'? You will feel better when you see there is no such thing as a loser or idiot.

The Semantic Method: Simply substitute language that is less colourful and emotionally loaded. This method is helpful for 'should' statements. Instead of telling yourself, "I shouldn't have made that mistake," you can say "It would be better if I wouldn't have made that mistake."

Reattribution: Instead of automatically assuming that you are "bad" and blaming yourself entirely for a problem, think about the many factors that may have contributed to the problem. Focus on problem solving instead of using up all your energy blaming yourself and feeling guilty.

Cost-Benefit Analysis: List all the advantages and disadvantages of a feeling (like getting angry when your plane is late), a negative thought (like "No matter how hard I try, I always screw up.") or a behaviour pattern (like overeating and lying around in bed when you're depressed). You can also use the Cost-Benefit Analysis to modify a self-defeating belief such as, "I must always try to be perfect."

5-4-3-2-1

Grounding Technique

Grounding is a technique that helps keep you in the present. This technique helps reorient you to the here-and-now and to present reality. Grounding skills can be helpful in managing overwhelming feelings or intense anxiety. Find a quiet place to sit comfortably.

Begin by picking out five things you can see and name them aloud.

Example:

1. I see the chair.
2. I see the desk.
3. I see the lamp.
4. I see the picture
5. I see the window

Next identify five things you hear and name them aloud.

Example:

1. I hear the air conditioning.
2. I hear the clock.
3. I hear a car outside
4. I hear my breath.
5. I hear a door closing.

Next pick five things you can feel and name them aloud.

'Feel' in this sense means things you can touch, not emotions.

Example:

1. I can feel my feet on the floor.
2. I can feel myself on the floor.
3. I can feel the air on my skin.
4. I feel my clothes on my skin.
5. I feel the air coming in my nose.

And then take a deep breath.

The process then repeats counting down to one.

Name 4 things you can see,
name 4 things you can hear,
name 4 things you can feel,
and take a deep breath.

Name 3 things you can see,
name 3 things you can hear,
name 3 things you can feel,
and take a deep breath.

Name 2 things you can see,
name 2 things you can hear,
name 2 things you can feel,
and take a deep breath.

Name 1 thing you can see,
name 1 thing you can hear,
name 1 thing you can feel,
and take a deep breath.

It is often helpful to rate the level (1-10) of tension or anxiety, etc., felt before and then after doing this centering technique.

At the end of the exercise, you may feel more relaxed and with much less "chatter" in your mind. If needed, you can repeat the procedure more than once. Do not feel you have to find latest items every time. It is okay if you say "I feel the chair" more than once or "I hear the furnace coming on" more than once.

Please note that this technique can be used for general relaxation in stressful situations, e.g., in a waiting room before an interview, during an exam or before difficult meetings.

progressive muscle relaxation

One of the body's reactions to fear and anxiety is muscle tension. This can result in feeling "tense", or can lead to muscle aches and pains, as well as leaving some people feeling exhausted. Think about how you respond to anxiety. Do you "tense up" when you're feeling anxious? Muscle relaxation can be particularly helpful in cases where anxiety is especially associated to muscle tension. This information sheet will guide you through a common form of relaxation designed to reduce muscle tension.

Muscle tension

Muscle tension is commonly associated with stress, anxiety and fear as part of a process that helps our bodies prepare for potentially dangerous situations. Even though some of those situations may not actually be dangerous, our bodies respond in the same way. Sometimes we don't even notice how our muscles become tense, but perhaps you clench your teeth slightly so your jaw feels tight, or maybe your shoulders become. Muscle tension can also be associated with backaches and tension headaches.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

One method of reducing muscle tension that people have found helpful is through a technique called Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). In progressive muscle relaxation exercises, you tense up particular muscles and then relax them, and then you practise this technique consistently.

preparing for relaxation

When you are beginning to practice progressive muscle relaxation exercises keep in mind the following points.

- **Physical injuries.** If you have any injuries, or a history of physical problems that may cause muscle pain, always consult your doctor before you start.
- **Select your surroundings.** Minimise the distraction to your five senses. Such as turning off the TV and radio, and using soft lighting.
- **Make yourself comfortable.** Use a chair that comfortably seats your body, including your head. Wear loose clothing, and take off your shoes.
- **Internal mechanics.** Avoid practicing after big, heavy meals, and do not practice after consuming any intoxicants, such as alcohol.

general procedure

- 1 Once you've set aside the time and place for relaxation, slow down your breathing and give yourself permission to relax.
- 2 When you are ready to begin, tense the muscle group described. Make sure you can feel the tension, but not so much that you feel a great deal of pain. Keep the muscle tensed for approximately 5 seconds.
- 3 Relax the muscles and keep it relaxed for approximately 10 seconds. It may be helpful to say something like "Relax" as you relax the muscle.
- 4 When you have finished the relaxation procedure, remain seated for a few moments allowing yourself to become alert.

Relaxation sequence

1. **Right hand and forearm.** Make a fist with your right hand.
2. **Right upper arm.** Bring your right forearm up to your shoulder to "make a muscle".
3. **Left hand and forearm.**
4. **Left upper arm.**
5. **Forehead.** Raise your eyebrows as high as they will go, as though you were surprised by something.
6. **Eyes and cheeks.** Squeeze your eyes tight shut.
7. **Mouth and jaw.** Open your mouth as wide as you can, as you might when you're yawning.
8. **Neck. !!!** Be careful as you tense these muscles. Face forward and then pull your head back slowly, as though you are looking up to the ceiling.
9. **Shoulders.** Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears.
10. **Shoulder blades/Back.** Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together, so that your chest is pushed forward.
11. **Chest and stomach.** Breathe in deeply, filling up your lungs and chest with air.
12. **Hips and buttocks.** Squeeze your buttock muscles
13. **Right upper leg.** Tighten your right thigh.
14. **Right lower leg. !!!** Do this slowly and carefully to avoid cramps. Pull your toes towards you to stretch the calf muscle.
15. **Right foot.** Curl your toes downwards.
16. **Left upper leg.** Repeat as for right upper leg.
17. **Left lower leg.** Repeat as for right lower leg.
18. **Left foot.** Repeat as for right foot.

Practice means progress. Only through practice can you become more aware of your muscles, how they respond with tension, and how you can relax them. Training your body to respond differently to stress is like any training – practising consistently is the key.

The Feelings List

Positive Feelings

Affectionate	Generous
Alive	Glad
Amused	Good
Accepted	Grateful
Beautiful	Great
Brave	Happy
Calm	Hopeful
Capable	Humorous
Caring	Joyful
Cheerful	Lovable
Cherished	Loved
Comfortable	Loving
Competent	Loyal
Concerned	Passionate
Confident	Peaceful
Content	Playful
Courageous	Pleased
Curious	Proud
Delighted	Quiet
Desirable	Relaxed
Eager	Relieved
Excited	Respected
Forgiving	Safe
Friendly	Satisfied
Fulfilled	
Secure	
Self-reliant	
Sexy	
Silly	
Special	
Strong	
Supportive	
Sympathetic	
Tender	

Negative Feelings

Afraid	Foolish
Angry	Frantic
Anxious	Frustrated
Apprehensive	Furious
Ashamed	Guilty
Awkward	Hateful
Bitter	Helpless
Bored	Hopeless
Confused	Horrificed
Contempt	Hostile
Defeated	Humiliated
Dejected	Hurt
Dependent	Ignored
Depressed	Impatient
Despairing	Inadequate
Desperate	Incompetent
Devastated	Indecisive
Disappointed	Inferior
Discouraged	Inhibited
Disgusted	Insecure
Distrustful	Irritated
Embarrassed	Isolated
Exasperated	Jealous
Fearful	Lonely
Melancholy	Touchy
Miserable	Trapped
Misunderstood	Troubled
Muddled	Unappreciated
Needy	Unattractive
Old	Uncertain
Outraged	Uncomfortable
Overwhelmed	Uneasy
Panicky	Unfulfilled

Resources



211 Alberta Edmonton and Area is here to help you find the right community and Social Service.

You can search for information on:

- Financial and social assistance
- Housing and utility help
- Food assistance and meal programs
- Seniors' services and home care
- Parenting and family programs
- Government program services
- Disability support services
- Volunteer organizations
- Newcomer services
- Mental health support
- And much more...

Phone 211 in Edmonton, Leduc, and Parkland County.

Feeling Hopeless? Thinking of suicide? When you're in emotional pain, your thoughts are clouded by that pain. If you are thinking about suicide, you are trying to end that pain. Please do not confuse ending your pain with ending your life. The two are very different!

Read more about Distress Line: [Distress Line \(cmha.ca\)](https://www.cmha.ca/distress-line)

Emergency Assistance

24 Hour Crisis Services

911 Emergency (if in immediate danger)	911
Addiction & Mental Health - Access 24/7	780-424-2424
AHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Crisis Team	780-427-4491
Distress Line	780-482-4357
First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Helpline	1-855-242-3310
Emergency Income Support Contact Center (ISCC)	780-644-5135 Press 4
Seniors' Abuse Helpline	780-454-8888
Elder Abuse Resource and Supports	780-477-2929
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-387-5437

Information & Support

211 Information and Referral Line (24/7)	211
Mental Health Helpline (24/7)	1-877-303-2642
Children Youth and Families Addictions & Mental Health Ages 5 - 18 Intake (Mon-Fri)	1-825-402-6799
Addiction Helpline (24/7)	1-866-332-2322
Alberta Supports Contact Center	780-644-9992
Family Violence Information Line (Toll Free) 24/7	310-1818
Sage Seniors Association	780-423-5510
Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (9am-9pm)	780-423-4121
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	780-424-7709

Shelters

WIN House (24/7)	780-479-0058
Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre	780-423-5302
HOPE Mission Emergency Shelter	780-422-2018
HOPE Mission Youth Shelter	780-422-2018
NEXUS Youth Empowerment & Support Services	780-468-7070
HOPE Mission - Herb Jamieson Centre for Men	780-429-3470
YESS Youth Empowerment & Support Services	780-468-7070
SAGE Safe House (60+years, M/F)	780-702-1520
A Safe Place Women's Shelter	780-464-7233

Resources

Community Resources

Food

WE CAN Food Basket Society 780-413-4525
Healthy fresh food for a low fee.

Food Bank (Client Services Line) 780-425-4190
www.edmontonsfoodbank.com

Collective Kitchen & Basic Shelf Program 780-735-3010

Refer to their manual at
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-collective-kitchen-manual.pdf>

Counselling/Support

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or
Employee & Family Assistance Plan (EFAP)
Confidential, free, or subsidized costs.

Family Center
1:1 Family, and Couples Counselling, Groups, 780-900-5934

Educational Psychology Dept. at U of A
Low fee for school year length support. 780-492-3746

The Mindfulness Institute
Local meditation groups. www.mindfulnessinstitute.ca

Edmonton Healing Centre for Grief & Loss 780-454-1194
Groups, sliding fee scale for 1:1 counselling. Ext. 224

City of Edmonton
1:1 Counselling, Groups, Family Violence Support. 780-496-4777

PCN Resources

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression
8-week course for Depression

Craving Change™
4-week course on Emotional Eating

Grief Recovery Support Group
Consecutive 8-week closed group therapy sessions

Other Themed Workshops

Insomnia
Coping with Anger
Effective Communication
Workplace Stress & Bullying
Survival Strategies for the Holidays

ePST™ Digital Therapy
6 weeks

Individual Counselling
Short Term 1:1 Counselling, 6 sessions

Phone Apps

Calm
Insight Timer
Headspace: Meditation & Sleep
Ten Percent Happier Meditation
Buddhify
Unplug
Simple Habit

Online Resources

The Center for Clinical Interventions
Find a number of free CBT based workbooks.
www.cci.health.wa.gov.au

Listen to audio files for breathing and mindfulness.
www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Other-Resources

Anxiety Canada
Find resources and information to help with anxiety.
www.anxietycanada.com

Therapist Aid

Free Worksheets www.therapistaid.com
Deep Breathing Exercise [Deep Breathing Exercise \(Video\) | Therapist Aid](#)