

BODY SCAN

Where is your anxiety sitting today?

Pause. Notice. Check in.

This is not a test and there is nothing you have to fix. The aim is simply to notice what is happening in your body right now, with curiosity rather than judgement.

Before you begin

Find a position that feels reasonably comfortable. You can sit, stand or lie down. Keep your eyes open if closing them feels uncomfortable. If focusing inside your body increases anxiety, stop and orient yourself to the room instead: notice what you can see, hear and physically touch.

Right now, my anxiety feels:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
calm			moderate					very intense		

What was happening just before I checked in?

A slow head-to-toe check-in

Move through each area at your own pace. You do not need to create a sensation; simply notice what is already there.

Head & thoughts

Notice pressure, buzzing, fogginess, dizziness, headache, racing thoughts or difficulty concentrating. Is your mind jumping ahead, replaying something, scanning for danger or going blank?

Jaw, mouth & face

Is your jaw clenched? Are you biting your cheeks, grinding your teeth, holding your tongue tightly, frowning or feeling tension around your eyes?

Neck & shoulders

Notice whether your shoulders are lifted, rigid or aching. Is your neck tight? Do you feel as though you are bracing yourself?

Chest & breathing

Notice your breathing without forcing it to change. Is it shallow, fast, held, uneven or comfortable? Is there tightness, heaviness, fluttering or a feeling that you cannot get a satisfying breath?

Heart

Can you notice your heartbeat? It may feel fast, pounding, fluttery or simply more noticeable than usual. Anxiety can make normal body sensations feel very loud.

Stomach & gut

Notice butterflies, nausea, tightness, churning, reflux, urgency, emptiness or loss of appetite. The gut and nervous system communicate closely, so anxiety often shows up here.

Arms, hands & fingers

Are your hands cold, sweaty, shaky, tingling, clenched or restless? Are you gripping something without noticing?

Hips, legs & feet

Notice tension, weakness, trembling, restlessness, heaviness or an urge to move or escape. Feel the contact between your feet and the floor if that is comfortable.

What stands out most?

The strongest sensation I notice is: _____

I notice it mainly in: _____

What might my body be responding to?

Sometimes anxiety arrives before we consciously understand why. Rather than asking 'What is wrong with me?', try asking 'What might my nervous system be responding to?'

Something happening now

A conversation, decision, demand, appointment, uncertainty, conflict, noise, crowd, deadline or change.

Something I am anticipating

Your body can react to what might happen, even when it has not happened yet.

Something that reminded me of the past

A sound, place, smell, message, person or feeling can activate an old alarm response.

Physical factors

Tiredness, hunger, pain, caffeine, illness, hormonal changes, sensory overload or being too hot/cold can amplify anxiety.

I do not know yet

You do not have to find an explanation. Noticing the sensation is enough for this check-in.

What do I think was happening before this anxiety increased?

What emotion might be sitting alongside the anxiety?

Fear | overwhelm | anger | sadness | uncertainty | embarrassment | frustration | excitement | something else: _____

What might I need right now?

A body scan is not about making anxiety disappear. It can help you decide what would support you in the next few minutes.

Less stimulation

Quieter space, lower lighting, headphones, fewer conversations, stepping away from a screen.

Movement

Stretch, shake out your hands, walk, change position or release your shoulders.

Grounding

Feel your feet, hold something cool or textured, look around and name where you are.

A slower exhale

If breathing exercises suit you, allow the exhale to become slightly longer than the inhale. Do not force deep breaths.

Practical support

Write down the next step, reduce the task, ask a question, postpone a non-urgent decision or ask someone for help.

Connection

Message or sit with somebody who feels safe. You do not have to explain everything to receive company.

Rest and basic needs

Check whether you need water, food, warmth, the toilet, medication you normally take, or a break.

Choose one small thing.

The thing that feels most manageable for me right now is:

After a few minutes, check again

My anxiety now feels:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
calm			moderate				very intense			

What changed, even slightly?

My body map

Use this page in whatever way works for you. You might shade areas, circle them, write words beside them or use different marks for tightness, heat, tingling, numbness, pain, restlessness or heaviness.

HEAD / FACE	What do I notice? _____
JAW / NECK	_____
SHOULDERS	_____
CHEST / HEART	_____
STOMACH / GUT	_____
ARMS / HANDS	_____
HIPS / LEGS	_____
FEET	_____
WHOLE BODY	_____

If my body could give me one message right now, it might say:

Remember: anxiety can produce powerful physical sensations. A body scan can help you notice patterns, but it is not a way to diagnose symptoms. New, severe or worrying physical symptoms should be assessed by an appropriate healthcare professional.

A message from me

When anxiety is loud, it can feel as though your body has turned against you. Often, your body is trying to protect you - it has noticed something it believes requires attention and has switched on its alarm system.

You do not have to argue with every sensation or force yourself to calm down. Sometimes the first useful step is simply to notice: my shoulders are tight; my stomach is churning; I am holding my breath; my hands are clenched. That noticing can create a little space between you and the anxiety.

Use this check-in gently. Some days you may work through the whole scan. Other days you may only notice one part of your body and decide what you need next. Both count.

Give yourself permission to pause long enough to hear what your body is communicating.

Pause. Notice. Check in.

What do I want to remember from today's body scan?

Space to Breathe Therapy

Support | Understanding | A brighter you