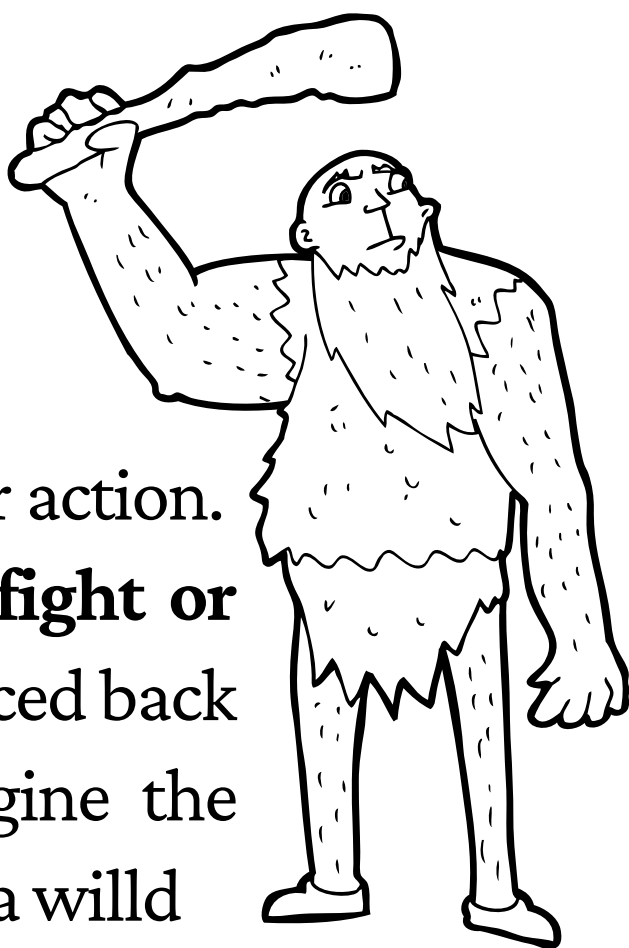


Anxiety and Tinnitus

"Fight or flight"

When we feel anxious, a chain of automatic events occurs in our own bodies, which prepares us for action. This reaction is often term the **"fight or flight" response** and it can be traced back into our evolutionary past. Imagine the primitive caveman threatened by a wild animal. He needs to be prepared for vigorous action: either to run or to fight. We still posses this survival reaction, although it is now triggered by more subtle situations – some of which we are not even consciously aware.

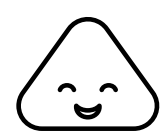


Your body

When a person anticipates or encounters a dangerous situation, the hormone adrenaline is released automatically by the nervous system and into the blood stream and into the large skeletal muscles of the arms and legs. The heart beats faster as it is working harder. Because it is working harder, it needs more fuel so we breathe in more oxygen. To cool the body down, sweat and blood capillaries come to the surface. When this chain of events occurs in a normal situation, for example if we are pushing a trolley around a supermarket, or sitting in a business meeting, it can be very frightening.

What can I do to get better?

- Understand the process and how anxiety persists because of a spiralling vicious circle between physical symptoms, worrying thoughts and changes in behaviour.
- Break into this vicious circle by learning new skills:



- Physical symptoms can be reduced by **learning relaxation** or **controlled breathing**.



- Mental symptoms, ie. worry, can be combated by a combination of **identifying** and challenging worrying thoughts and **replacing** them with helpful ones, and/or distracting yourself



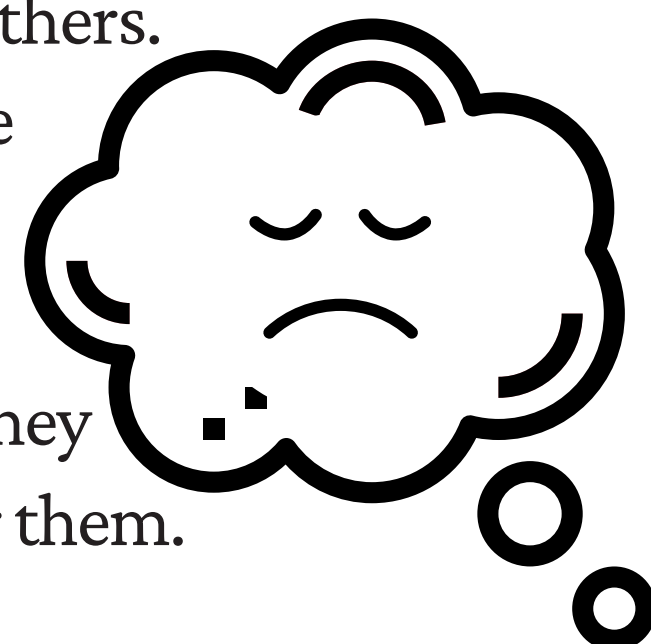
- Behavioural changes can be altered by deliberately **changing your behaviour** and going back into a difficult situations in a gradual step-by-step fashion

Unhelpful thoughts

Very often, when people have bouts of anxiety they experience **unhelpful thoughts**...

For example, they may think that something terrible is going to happen, that they will lose control or losing face in front of others.

Many people are **unaware** that they have these thoughts until they begin to look for them.



Make alterations to your lifestyle and **manage the amount of stress** you put yourself under. This might involve learning to be more assertive, managing your time better, breaking unhelpful habits or learning new skills.

Diagram below explains the vicious circle of anxiety:

