



**Sport
In Mind**

**British
Equestrian**

ANXIETY

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is the feeling associated with being worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which could happen in the future. It's a natural human response and can be experienced through thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.

Anxiety can become a mental health problem if it affects someone's ability to live life to the extent they want. For example, it may become a problem if:

- it is difficult to go about everyday life or do enjoyable things
- situations that might cause anxiety are avoided
- feelings of anxiety are very strong or last for a long time
- symptoms of anxiety are regular (and could include panic attacks)
- fears or worries are out of proportion to the situation
- worries feel very distressing or are hard to control.

Anxiety symptoms can last for a long time, or come and go. There might be difficulties with day-to-day life, including:

- looking after physical health
- forming or maintaining relationships
- holding down a job
- trying new things
- enjoying leisure time.

In some cases, anxiety can have a serious impact on the ability to work.

Effects of anxiety on your body

- sleep problems
- faster breathing
- a fast, thumping or irregular heartbeat
- a churning feeling in the stomach
- feeling light-headed or dizzy
- feeling restless or unable to sit still
- pins and needles
- headaches, backache or other aches and pains
- sweating or hot flushes
- needing the toilet more or less often
- grinding teeth, especially at night
- nausea (feeling sick)
- changes in sex drive
- having panic attacks.

Effects of anxiety on your mind

- feeling as though the worrying will not stop, or that bad things will happen if worrying does stop
- feeling tense, nervous or unable to relax
- feeling like the world is speeding up or slowing down
- having a sense of dread, or fearing the worst
- worrying about anxiety itself, for example, worrying about when panic attacks might happen
- feeling like other people notice the anxiety and are looking
- wanting lots of reassurance from other people.