

Are you feeling panicked?

Panic is your body's alert system to help you respond to threats. Sometimes, this can become overwhelming and we might experience a panic attack.

Understanding panic

When we were early humans and had to deal with predators and unexpected threats, panic or anxiety was a way of alerting us to danger and helping our body to prepare to respond to these threats. This is our fight, flight, freeze response and even though the "threats" we face today might be really different, our body still has the same reaction. Watch this [video](#) to understand more.

Panic attacks

A panic attack is an exaggerated version of this threat response. When it happens, it can be frightening and confusing and can feel like:

- A thudding or racing heartbeat
- Rapid breathing or not able to catch your breath
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling really hot and sweaty, or really cold and shivery
- Feeling sick
- Pain in your chest

The feeling might be overwhelming, but it is important to remember that this will pass. There are some things that you can try both during and after a panic attack to help.

- Think about your breathing – Focus on controlling your breaths, trying to slow them down. Counting or visualising waves rolling in and out can help with this.
- Ground yourself – Using grounding techniques helps us to connect to our body and our senses. Focus on the textures of your clothes, flavours you may be able to taste in your mouth or specific sounds in the world around you.
- Afterwards – A panic attack can be draining so make sure you take time to rest, drink some water or eat something. When you feel ready, talking to someone you trust can help you understand what happened and why.

Watch this [video](#) for more information.