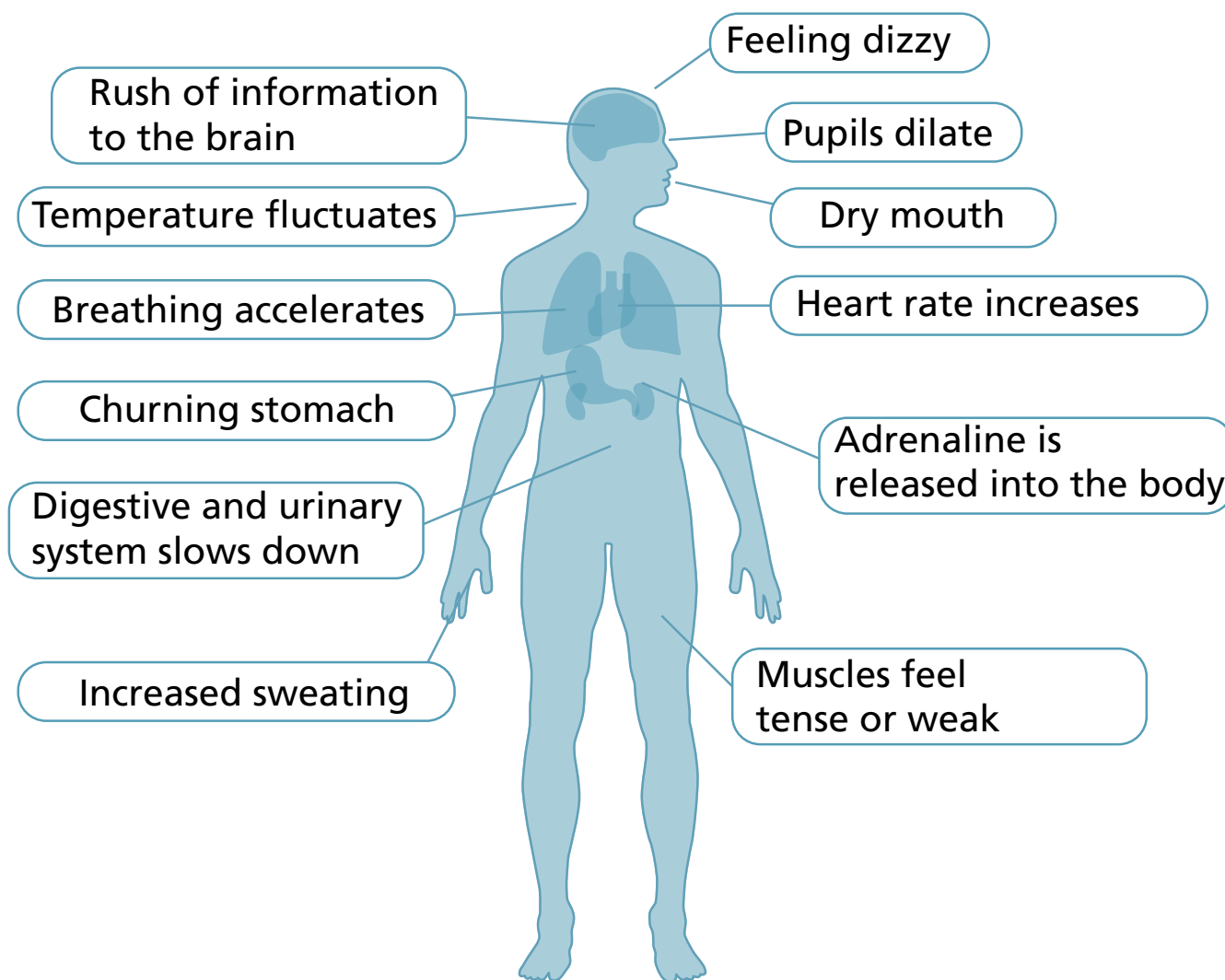


## What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a **normal** response to experiencing threat.

We are hardwired to respond to a threat by protecting ourselves and getting ourselves to safety. This ensures our survival. The physical symptoms of anxiety are connected to the fight or flight response. This is the physical response our body activates when we feel in danger. The body prepares itself to run away or fight off an attack.



## What can help when you feel anxious?

- Pause. Take a minute to focus on slowing down your breathing. This can help to slow down the fight/flight response in your body and give you time to think.
- Exercise can help with the body's adrenaline response. Go for a walk, run or cycle. Do some gardening or housework.
- Try some distraction techniques. Put on some music, watch TV. This can help reduce feelings of anxiety in your body in the short term.
- Think through what you are feeling anxious about. When we feel anxious our thoughts can be biased about our ability to cope. Understand what you are reacting to and what you are worrying will happen. This can help for you to reflect on whether this is out of proportion to the situation and whether you may be underestimating your ability to cope.
- It may help to write out thoughts and think about whether you can see another perspective. Is your anxiety based on fact or opinion? What would a more balanced view sound like?
- Remember that anxiety is **normal**. We tend to struggle with having difficult thoughts and feelings and try to get rid of them. Learning to notice that these thoughts are there without trying to change or control them in any way means we can instead focus on pursuing what is important to us. Mindfulness exercises can be helpful to learn how to pay attention non judgmentally to the here and now without get caught up in thoughts and feelings.
- Be kind to yourself. Think about what you might say to someone else in this situation and how you could apply that compassionately to yourself.
- Visualise yourself coping with the situation you feel anxious about. See this through to a successful completion.
- Maintain connections with others even if you cannot do this face to face. Talk to someone else about how you are feeling.
- Keep a gratitude journal so that you are able to notice and pay attention to things in your life that you appreciate. It is also important to try to keep doing things you enjoy and to schedule time for these, even when you feel stressed and worried.