

Anxiety and sleep



The impact of anxiety on sleep

About

Anxiety can have a significant impact on sleep. It can make it difficult for us to settle to sleep and cause us to wake in the night too.

Not having enough sleep can also increase feelings of anxiety and lower our mood.

Did you know?

Cortisol gets a bad rap for being our stress hormone, but amongst other things, it is an important hormone that makes us feel alert and plays a part in waking us up in the morning.



Top Tip Toolbox

Deep breathing exercises can help lower cortisol. Try doing these intermittently throughout the day as well as before bed. There are lots of different exercises to choose from so trying several is important to find which one suits you best.

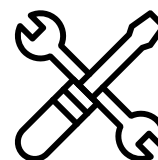
Exercises such as Yoga and Tai Chi, may help your child relax and regulate their breathing, reducing stress levels. Whereas high intensity exercise can increase cortisol for a short time after and increases body temperature, so try to avoid doing this for 2 hours before bed.

Many children want to talk about their day when you are trying to get them to settle to sleep. Setting aside 'time to talk' in their evening routine - for example, before supper - can help reduce these discussions at bedtime. Always end talking time on a positive, by talking about some of the good points from the day, your child's favourite subject, or something they are looking forward to.

Having a structured bedtime routine can help to reduce anxiety. Make sure that homework is finished and school bags are packed before supper time.

Using a visual schedule can help children to understand their routines and reduce anxiety. This may be a weekly planner to remind them who is picking them up after school for example, or if they have any appointments. It can also be useful to use visual routines for daily tasks such as the bedtime routine. (see guidance sheet on visual resources).

If your child is struggling with their anxiety, seek help through your GP. Your child's school may also be able to support or signpost to supporting services and don't forget you can search for local services through the council directory.

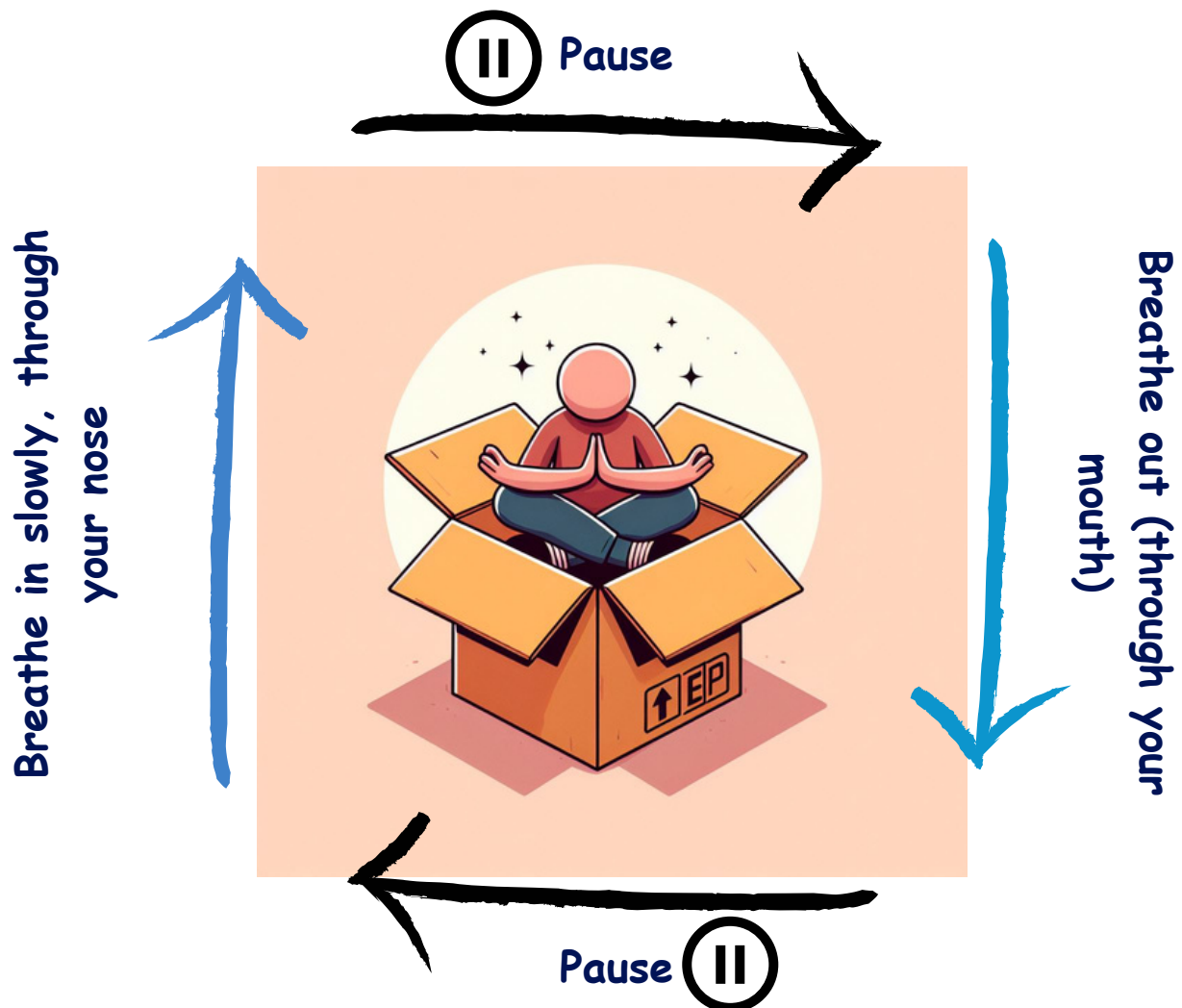


Breathing Exercises



Box breathing

Trace around the box as you slowly breathe through your nose. Pause for a couple of seconds and then breathe out slowly through your mouth.



Breathing Exercises



5 finger breathing

Trace around your fingers as you slowly breathe in and out, pausing for a second or 2 at the tip of each finger. Continue till you have traced each finger

