

Interoceptive Exposure

This worksheet outlines various ways to replicate the physiological symptoms of anxiety.

Interoceptive Exposure is based on the premise that exposure to panic-related physiological symptoms helps us recognize and feel more familiar with them when they arise unexpectedly.

Check with a physician or health professional prior to completing any of the exercises, as they are designed to cause some discomfort.

Use the *Exercise* column to read through the instructions for the physiological symptom you would like to induce, then carry out the activity for a period of time that you feel comfortable with. The time frames provided are only recommendations.

In the *Thoughts and Physical Symptoms*, note the bodily sensations you experience, along with the thoughts that came to mind while you were completing the exercise.

Rate your anxiety in the final column on a scale of 1-100%, where 1 is the lowest anxiety and 100% is the highest.

| Exercise | Thoughts and Physical Symptoms <i>Did your body feel anything? What passed through your head?</i> | Anxiety Rating <i>Rate your anxiety on a scale of 1-100%</i> |
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| <i>Breathing</i> | | |
| 1 min: Breathe heavily and excessively Make your breath deep, rapid, and vigorous | | |
| 30 sec: Hold in your breath for 30 seconds | | |
| 2 min: Use a drinking straw to breathe, using only your mouth | | |
| <i>Twirling and Shaking</i> | | |
| 3 min: Twirl on the spot for 30 seconds, then stand still for 30 seconds. Repeat. | | |
| 30 sec: Shake your head rapidly from one side to another. Stare straight ahead without closing your eyes. | | |

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| 1 min: Sitting in a rotating chair, twirl in place for 60 seconds. | | |
| <i>Physiological</i> | | |
| 2 min: Rapidly, but carefully, pace up and down a flight of stairs | | |
| 2 min: Jog or sprint in place Raise your legs high with each step | | |
| 1 min: Tighten or scrunch your whole body | | |
| <i>Head Spin</i> | | |
| 1 min: Lie flat for 60 seconds, then suddenly sit up | | |
| 1 min: Sit with your head between your thighs for 60 seconds, then quickly sit straight up | | |
| <i>Depersonalization and Derealization</i> | | |
| 3 min: Stare at an eye-level dot on a wall. | | |
| 3 min: Stare at a 60 Watt lightbulb for 30 seconds (45 cm away), then read a newspaper for 30 seconds. Repeat. | | |
| 2 min: Focus on a plain surface or wall for 120 seconds. Don't blink. | | |