

- Anxiety / Mental health

## How to feel calmer in an instant

WITH NEW RESEARCH SUGGESTING WE'RE MORE ANXIOUS THAN EVER, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST DR KIRREN SCHNACK TELLS HANNAH BRITT HOW TO UNWIND – FAST!

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in a constant state of dread and grinding our teeth down to stumps has become a modern-day curse for many of us.



A survey by the Mental Health Foundation claims anxiety is at an all-time high, with its survey revealing nearly three-quarters of people polled felt on edge at some point in the previous two weeks.

One in five admitted to feeling anxious most or all of the time.

Experts put the spike down to our ever-turbulent world.

“The pandemic saw a huge increase in anxiety, says clinical psychologist Dr Kirren Schnack.

“Fast forward to 2023 and there’s the cost-of-living crisis and climate change too.”

With two decades of experience working in mental health, she has more than half a million followers on social media (@drkirren on TikTok).

Dr Schnack says: “What’s more, we are now constantly connected to all kinds of information – we have instant access to everything happening in the world at all times. This can be overwhelming, triggering anxiety. But with my help, you can feel 10 times calmer – and fast.”

### WHAT IS CALM?

Many people live in a state of constant fight or flight. Calming down is about tipping the scales back the other way.

When you’re calm, your body is in what we call the relaxation response. The anxious activity in your nervous system has switched off, you’re not producing stress hormones adrenaline or cortisol, and therefore not experiencing physical symptoms of anxiety, such as fast heart rate, feeling of dread and sweaty palms.

### HOW TO CHILL OUT Understand why you’re anxious

We may want to get rid of anxiety, but often it’s there for a legitimate reason. When it spikes, it’s about finding what the trigger was. It could be a thought, a sensation, a memory.

Get to the bottom of it. You can’t deal with a problem until you understand it.

### Accept its presence

■ Try: Write down what is making you anxious, fold up the paper, put it in a box and leave it.

Come back and deal with it later. Physically parking it helps to mentally contain it.

Ask other people – more than one if possible – what would they do?