

ANXIETY INDUCTION EXERCISES

These are exercises that you can do to simulate some of the physical symptoms of anxiety and panic. The idea is to do one or two of these in your own safe environment and then practice tolerating the experience and working through the symptoms with deep breathing (or any other positive coping skill).

Using these “induction exercises” can help you to reclaim some control. Rather than letting anxiety think that it runs the show, you can say “bring it on!” and prove that you are not afraid of it.

Of course, you should clear everything with your doctor first. These sensations and symptoms on their own will not harm you, but if you have a heart condition or pulmonary disease, some of these might not be a good idea.

EXERCISE	ANXIETY SYMPTOM THAT IS SIMULATED
Hold breath for 30 seconds	Suffocation sensation
Spin in chair for a minute	Dizziness, faint feeling
Hyperventilate for a minute	Breathlessness
Tense all muscles in body for a minute	Trembling, shaking, tension
Breathe through a narrow straw (like a coffee stirrer) for 30 seconds to 2 minutes while plugging nose.	Breathlessness, suffocation sensation
Shake head from side to side for 30 seconds	Dizzy, faint feeling
Stare at self in mirror or up at a tall building continuously for 2 minutes	Derealization, dizziness, vertigo
Run in place or do jumping jacks for a minute	Racing heart