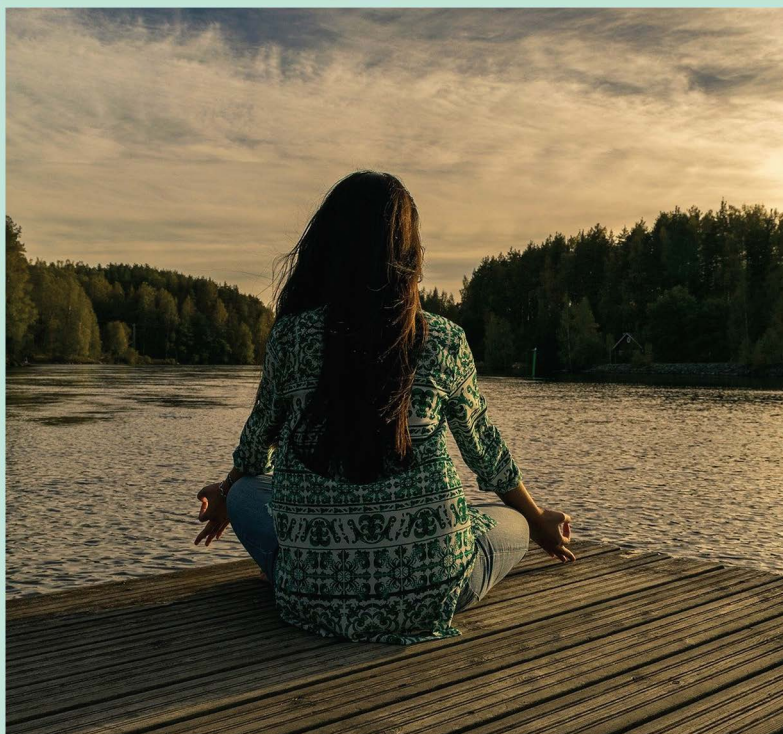


# *Some top tips & favourite exercises*

*- shared with love by our community*

If you've watched any of the videos in this [Don't You Worry 'Bout A Thing](#) part of our [Balance toolkit](#), or perhaps checked out a few else where in our Balance toolkit, you'll know that some of the content on these pages comes from our series of [Balance talks](#). Each time we do one of these talks, our community of curious and generous creatives astound us with not only their generosity of spirit and open-ness, but also their wisdom. Trust us, a Balance talk is an uplifting place to be!

So here, to help you bust any stress you may be feeling or combat any anxious thoughts whirling around in your heard, are some of our community's favourite exercises and personal tips, as shared in various Balance sessions. They're shared with love, not just from us, but from the community of which you are now a part! Welcome, and we hope they are a real source of help and inspiration!



First up, some exercises to help reduce anxiety. There are lots of things that can help people reduce their anxiety levels, but we're all different, and what works for one creative won't work for another. Take a look through the list of exercises and tips we're sharing here, pick out the ones that speak to you, and then maybe let us know how you get on.

And of course, if you have any you'd like us to add to the list, do get in [touch with us](#) about that too!

### Breathe in and out

So we had to start with this one, right? There's no doubt that deep breathing helps us all calm down. But what, if like us, you worry about 'not doing it right'? There are so many books about breathing! The good news is that while there are specific breathing exercises, in moments of stress you don't need to worry about counting out a certain number of breaths. All you need to do is just focus on evenly inhaling and exhaling. Trust us and abandon the counting! Doing this, just focusing on your breath, will help slow down and re-center your mind.

### Stay in the now

Anxiety is a worry you have about the future. One way of tackling it that some people find useful is to bring yourself back to the now, to the present. It's often really helpful to ask things like "What's happening right now?" "Am I safe?" "Is there something I really need to do about this right now?" If there isn't, then make an appointment to check in with yourself later in the day or week, at a point when you can revisit your worries in a calmer state. Do that, and then give yourself permission to move on as best you can, knowing that you've scheduled a time to address your worry.

### Sniff lavender oil

A favourite amongst some people we know, lavender oil has a lot of healing properties, promoting a feeling of calm, supporting better sleep and helping with headaches. We'd recommend keeping keep a bottle of lavender oil in your studio, office (or bag, if you're on the move). Breathe it in and/or massage it into your temples when you need an extra shot of calm! Oh, and you get bonus points if you remember to breathe slowly and deeply at the same time!

### Get your facts straight

Our anxiety can mean we get stuck on the worst-case scenarios. What we need to do is think instead about how realistic these scenarios we're playing out in our minds are. Let's say you've got a pitch for a potential new client, and it's making you really anxious. Instead of worrying about all the ways you might mess up, try instead to acknowledge that you're nervous, but prepared. Reframing our fears helps us train our brains to come up with more rational ways to deal with our anxious thoughts. Phew!

### Phone a friend, or get some words on a page

The saying goes that “a problem shared is a problem halved”, and it’s true that one of the best ways to calm a stressed mind is to reach out to a trusted friend or colleague and run through with them the problem that’s worrying you. Try to think about what you want from the conversation – is it advice, or would you like them to ask you questions so that you can arrive at a new set of conclusions yourself. We’re not sure why, but saying things out loud can really sharpen your clarity. If you can’t reach out to a friend, try writing about your worries.

Journalling can be just as powerful, and we’re never very far away from our notebooks at hub towers as in the main we’re definitely people who think best with a pen in our hands!

### Why don’t you go do something less boring instead?

Sometimes all it takes to regain a sense of control is go do something else instead. Suggestions from our community for so-called stress ‘circuit breakers’ range from standing up, going for a walk and doing a 5 minute micro-blitz/clean, to jumping up and down on a bouncy chair. Whatever takes your fancy, anything that interrupts that unhelpful train of thought should work a treat, slow your thoughts down and help you feel more in control.





### Watch something funny

Turns out laughter really is the best medicine, or at least a relatively easy way of reducing anxiety. Watching a funny video, or in fact anything that makes you laugh (misbehaving puppies, cute toddlers etc), is one of the fastest ways we've found to reduce our anxiety levels. It's true, and scientifically so, as research has shown that it's physiologically impossible to laugh and stay anxious at the same time. What's more laughing causes your body to relax in a way that rids you of anxiety, whilst also bringing in oxygen-rich air that stimulates your hearts and lungs, which in turn causes a spike in your endorphins, the hormone-like substances that produce feelings of wellbeing.



### Listen to the top 10 most relaxing songs in the world!

(Or make your own playlist!)

Now we love a good playlist at the hub, so imagine how excited we were when we found [Mindlab](#) had created a [Top 10 most relaxing songs in the world playlist](#). The Number 1 track, called 'Weightless', was written by Marconi Union and a group of sound therapists with the specific purpose of reducing anxiety, and in the Mindlab study, was found to reduce participants' anxiety by an amazing 65%. Now maybe that tune, or Adele's 'Someone Like You' or 'Strawberry Swing' by Coldplay, aren't your cup of tea. But what's to stop you making your own go to playlist for moments of intense anxiety?!