



Your Body on Anxiety: Understanding the False Alarm

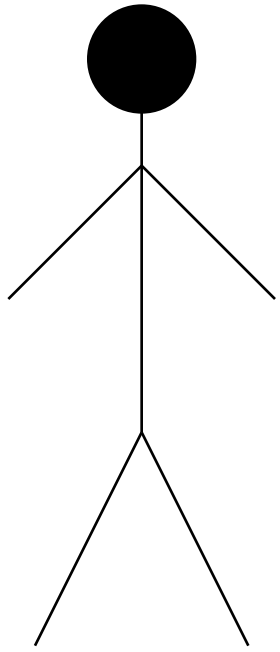
Anxiety is your body’s alarm system. When your **sympathetic nervous system** switches on, it prepares you for fight, flight, or freeze. This is helpful if there’s real danger — but when it’s a false alarm, it just feels uncomfortable. Remember: anxiety symptoms are **uncomfortable, not dangerous**. Your **parasympathetic nervous system** helps bring the body back into balance — often called “rest and digest.” By learning how your body works, you can remind yourself that what feels scary is really just your alarm system trying to help.

Sympathetic vs. Parasympathetic: What Happens in Your Body

Body System	Fight / Flight / Freeze (Sympathetic)	Rest & Digest (Parasympathetic)
Heart	Beats faster to pump blood to muscles	Slows down, steady rhythm
Breathing	Quick and shallow to bring in oxygen	Slow and steady
Muscles	Tense, ready for action	Relaxed
Stomach/Digestion	Slows or stops digestion	Digestion resumes
Sweat	Increases to cool body	Normalizes
Skin	May feel flushed or tingly	Returns to baseline
Mind	Scans for danger, racing thoughts	Clear, focused

Reflection: Where Do You Feel Anxiety in Your Body?

When your alarm system goes off, what do you notice first? Write below or circle areas on the body outline.



Remember: Anxiety is your body trying to protect you. It may feel uncomfortable, but it is not dangerous.