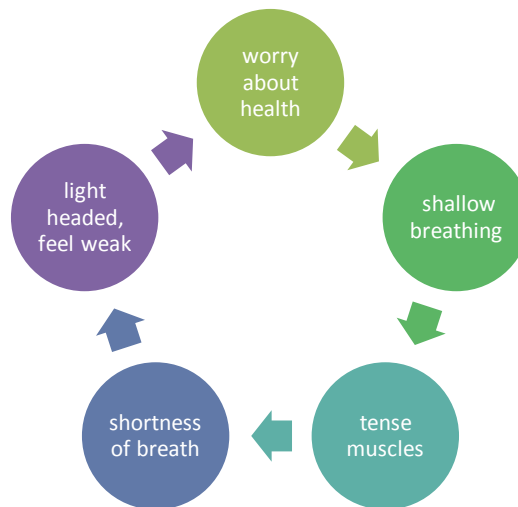


The Anxiety-Breathlessness Trap

During this time of uncertainty it is normal to experience anxiety. We are all paying attention to our physical health and perhaps on the lookout for symptoms due to our anxiety about our health.

When we are anxious this has a direct impact on our physical body as well as how and what we think about. When anxious we can end up breathing shallowly (from the chest) and more quickly. Anxiety causes our muscles to become tense which makes breathing more effortful. This type of breathing can in turn cause us to feel light headed and breathless. These sensations can in turn increase our anxiety if they are interpreted as a sign of something wrong with our health.

An Anxiety-Breathlessness Trap

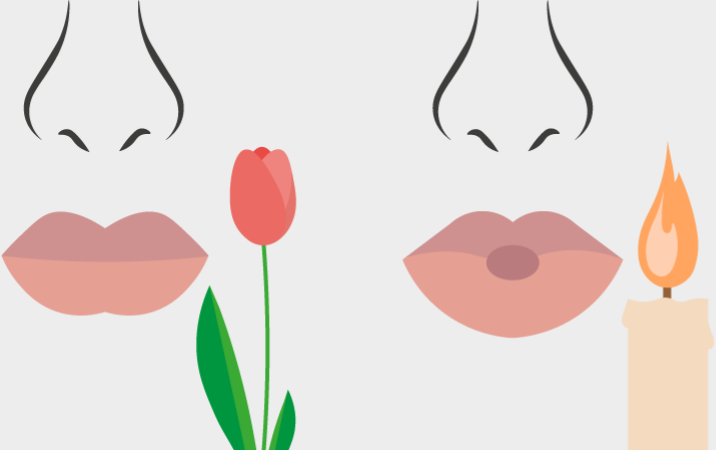


If you notice a change to your breathing here are some simple strategies that can help to regain control of your breathing:

- **Sit comfortably on a chair or lie down. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. If you can close your eyes this can help you to concentrate on your breath.**
- **Place your left hand on top of your breastbone and your right hand on top of your tummy.**
- **Pay attention to your hands as you breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. As your breathing begins to settle, you will notice the hand on your tummy move up and down whilst the hand on your breastbone remains still.**
- **Continue to pay attention to your breathing, inhaling and exhaling at an even pace.**
- **Saying “breathe in” and “breathe out” to yourself can help to slow your breathing down.**
- **If your mind wanders this is completely normal, gently bring your attention back to the sensation of breathing and your tummy moving up and down with each breath.**
- **Practice this for several breaths until you have noticed your breathing becoming calmer.**
- **Aiming to allow your breath out to be longer than your breath in**

Using an image can help you to focus

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*Breathe in slowly like you are **smelling a flower** & then slowly release your breath through pursed lips like you are gently **moving a candle** flame without blowing it out.*