



# Rise & Conquer

ANXIETY GUIDE

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# Why You Can't Think Your Way Out of Anxiety

— *And What Actually Works* —

**A practical guide to understanding your nervous system and finally feeling like yourself again**  
**Includes: Education · Tools · Reflection Prompts · Workbook Exercises**

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# Hi, I'm Jess 🖐️

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I'm a psychotherapist, clinical hypnotherapist and NLP practitioner based in Warragul, Victoria — and I work with people who are exhausted from trying to hold it all together. My specialty being in anxiety & trauma.

You might be someone who looks completely fine on the outside. You're functioning. You're showing up. But underneath? You're running on empty, overthinking everything, and wondering why nothing you try actually sticks.

I created this guide because the answer isn't more willpower. It's not more positive thinking. And it's definitely not just pushing through.

It starts with understanding what's actually happening in your body — and learning to work with your nervous system, instead of fighting against it.

***"Your body isn't broken. It learned to survive. Now let's teach it something new."***

This guide is packed with education, practical tools, reflection prompts and workbook exercises you can use right now. Take it at your own pace. Come back to it. Use it as a starting point — and know that deeper support is always available when you're ready.

With warmth,

Jess x

## What's Inside This Guide

- ✓ Section 1: What's Actually Happening in Your Body
- ✓ Section 2: Why Mindset Work Alone Isn't Enough
- ✓ Section 3: The 5 Signs Your Nervous System Is Stuck
- ✓ Section 4: Tools to Start Regulating Right Now
- ✓ Section 5: The Missing Piece Most People Skip
- ✓ Section 6: Reflection Prompts & Workbook Exercises
- ✓ Section 7: Your Next Step

# Section 1: What's Actually Happening in Your Body

## Your Nervous System 101

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Most people think of anxiety as a thinking problem. A mind problem. Something you can logic your way out of if you just try hard enough.

But anxiety is first and foremost a body response. It's your nervous system doing exactly what it was designed to do — protect you.

Your autonomic nervous system has two main states:

### The Parasympathetic State (Safe & Connected)

This is your 'rest and digest' mode. You feel calm, present, able to think clearly and connect with the people around you. Your body feels safe.

### The Sympathetic State (Threat Response)

This is your 'fight or flight' mode. Your heart races, your breathing shallows, your muscles tense. Your body is preparing to face danger — whether that danger is real or perceived.

### The Freeze State

When fight or flight feels impossible, your nervous system may go into freeze — a shutdown or collapse response. This can feel like numbness, disconnection, exhaustion, or feeling completely stuck.

Here's the important part: your nervous system cannot tell the difference between a real physical threat and an emotional or psychological one. A difficult conversation, a looming deadline, a social situation — your body responds to all of these the same way it would respond to physical danger.

***"Anxiety isn't irrational. It's your body trying to keep you safe — it just hasn't updated its threat list in a while."***

Over time, if your nervous system is repeatedly activated without fully returning to safety, it can become stuck in a state of high alert. This is dysregulation — and it's incredibly common.

## Section 2: Why Mindset Work Alone Isn't Enough

Here's something I want you to really hear, especially if you've been trying everything and still feel stuck:

**You cannot think your way out of a dysregulated nervous system. Regulation comes before logic — always.**

When your body is in a state of threat, the logical, rational part of your brain (the prefrontal cortex) goes partially offline. This is why in the middle of a panic attack or an anxiety spiral, no amount of telling yourself to 'calm down' or 'be rational' actually works.

Your brain is prioritising survival — not problem solving.

This is also why:

- ✓ Positive affirmations feel hollow when you're anxious
- ✓ You can know something isn't rational and still feel terrified
- ✓ Journaling helps a little but doesn't shift the deeper pattern
- ✓ Willpower runs out — because it's working against your biology, not with it

Real, lasting change happens when we work at the level of the nervous system — calming the body first, so the mind can follow. This is exactly what therapeutic approaches like hypnotherapy, somatic work, and NLP do.

They don't just change what you think. They change what your body believes is true.

***"When your body feels safe, your mind can finally do the work."***

## Section 3: The 5 Signs Your Nervous System Is Stuck

Nervous system dysregulation doesn't always look like a panic attack. Sometimes it's quieter than that. More chronic. More 'just how life feels now.'

Here are five signs your nervous system may be stuck in a state of high alert:

### 1. You wake up already anxious

Before the day has even started, there's a low-level hum of dread or tension. You open your eyes and your body is already braced.

### 2. You know you're overreacting — but can't stop

You can see yourself spiralling. You know it's not as bad as it feels. But you can't access the rational part of your brain because your nervous system has taken the wheel.

### 3. You're exhausted even after rest

Running in a constant state of low-level threat is physically depleting. Your body is using enormous amounts of energy to stay hypervigilant — even while you sleep.

### 4. Your brain won't switch off

Overthinking, ruminating, replaying conversations — this is your nervous system trying to 'solve' the threat by running every possible scenario. It's exhausting. And it rarely helps.

### 5. You feel disconnected from yourself or others

Numbness, emotional flatness, feeling like you're watching your own life from a distance — this is often the freeze response. Your nervous system has decided that shutting down is safer than feeling.

 **Check In: How many of these resonate with you right now? There are no right or wrong answers — just honest ones.**

- ☐ I wake up already anxious or dreading the day
- ☐ I know I'm overreacting but can't stop the spiral
- ☐ I feel exhausted even when I've had enough rest
- ☐ My brain won't switch off — especially at night
- ☐ I feel disconnected, numb, or detached from life

**What does anxiety feel like in YOUR body? Where do you feel it most?**



## Section 4: Tools to Start Regulating Right Now

These tools work because they signal safety to your nervous system at a physiological level. They're not distractions or coping tricks — they're regulation techniques rooted in neuroscience and therapeutic practice.

Start with one. Practice it consistently. Let your body learn that safety is possible.

### Tool 1: Extended Exhale Breathing

Your exhale activates the parasympathetic nervous system — your 'rest and digest' state. Making your exhale longer than your inhale is one of the fastest ways to tell your body it's safe.

**Try this: Inhale for 4 counts → Hold for 2 → Exhale for 6–8 counts. Repeat for 2–3 minutes.**

### Tool 2: Grounding — The 5-4-3-2-1 Technique

When you're spiralling, your nervous system is living in the future (what if) or the past (what happened). Grounding brings you back to the present moment — the only place where you're actually safe right now.

**Name: 5 things you can see · 4 you can touch · 3 you can hear · 2 you can smell · 1 you can taste**

### Tool 3: Physiological Sigh

A double inhale through the nose (one short, one long) followed by a long exhale through the mouth. This deflates the air sacs in your lungs and rapidly reduces physiological arousal. It's one of the fastest-acting regulation tools available to you.

**Inhale through nose → short second sniff → long slow exhale through mouth. Repeat 2–3 times.**

### Tool 4: Cold Water Reset

Splashing cold water on your face or holding your wrists under cold running water activates the dive reflex — slowing your heart rate and interrupting the stress response almost immediately.

### Tool 5: Body Scan & Release

Anxiety lives in the body — held breath, tight shoulders, clenched jaw, a stomach in knots. A slow body scan helps you locate where you're holding tension and consciously release it.

**Try this: Close your eyes. Start at the top of your head. Slowly move your awareness down through your body. Wherever you notice tension — breathe into it, and let it go on the exhale.**

**Which tool are you going to try first? When will you use it?**

**After trying a tool, come back and write: What did you notice in your body before and after?**



## Section 5: The Missing Piece Most People Skip

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The tools in Section 4 are genuinely powerful — and they work. But they're the surface layer.

What often keeps people stuck in anxiety — even when they know the tools, even when they're doing all the right things — is what's running underneath.

Stored patterns. Old beliefs. Experiences from the past that your nervous system never fully processed.

This is where deeper work comes in.

### The SubconsciousMind & Stored Patterns

The subconscious mind runs about 95% of your daily experience. It's not trying to hurt you — it's trying to protect you based on patterns it learned, often a very long time ago.

An anxious response to conflict might trace back to a childhood home where conflict felt unsafe. A belief that you're not good enough might have formed the day someone told you so — and your subconscious has been running that program ever since.

These patterns don't respond well to logic. Telling yourself 'I know I'm enough' doesn't erase a belief that's been wired in at a deeper level. But working with the subconscious mind — through approaches like clinical hypnotherapy, NLP and psychotherapy — does.

*"Healing isn't about fixing something broken. It's about updating an old program that no longer serves you."*

### What ThisLooksLike in Practice

- ✓ Identifying the root of an anxiety pattern — not just the symptoms
- ✓ Releasing stored tension and trauma from the body
- ✓ Rewiring subconscious beliefs that are keeping you stuck
- ✓ Building new neural pathways for calm, safety and confidence
- ✓ Creating lasting change — not just temporary relief

**What do you think might be underneath your anxiety? Is there an old story, belief or experience that still feels alive in your body?**

## Section 6: Full Reflection & Workbook

Take your time with these. There's no right way to do this — just honest. You might want to come back to different questions at different times.

### Part A: Understanding Your Anxiety

**When did you first remember feeling anxious? What was happening in your life at that time?**

**What are your most common anxiety triggers? (situations, people, thoughts, sensations)**

**How does anxiety show up in your body? Where do you feel it?**

**What has anxiety stopped you from doing, saying, or becoming?**

### Part B: Your Nervous System Patterns

**Do you tend more toward fight/flight (anxious, reactive, on edge) or freeze (numb, shut down, disconnected)? Or both at different times?**

**What does 'safe' feel like in your body? Can you recall a moment when you felt truly calm and settled?**

**What currently helps you feel more regulated — even a little? (people, places, activities, sensations)**

## **Part C: The Stories Underneath**

**What do you believe about yourself when anxiety is at its loudest? (e.g. 'I can't cope', 'I'm too much', 'I'm not safe')**

**Where did that belief come from? Is it actually true?**

What would be different in your life if anxiety no longer had this hold on you?

## Part D: Your Commitment

Real change requires small, consistent action. Not perfection — just intention.

One tool I will practise this week:

One belief I am willing to question:

One way I will be kinder to myself when anxiety shows up:

The support I am willing to seek:

## Section 7: You Don't Have to Keep White-Knuckling It

If you've made it through this guide — if you've sat with these questions and been honest with yourself — that already takes courage.

I want you to know something:

**The fact that you're still anxious isn't proof that you're broken. It's proof that you haven't yet had the right support to change it.**

This guide is a starting point. The tools here are real and they work. But if you've been carrying anxiety for a long time — if it's affecting your relationships, your sleep, your ability to show up the way you want to — you deserve more than self-help.

You deserve personalised, therapeutic support that gets to the root of what's happening and creates real, lasting change.

### What Working With Me Looks Like

I work with people in Warragul and online across Australia. My approach combines:

- ✓ Psychotherapy — understanding and processing what's beneath the surface
- ✓ Clinical Hypnotherapy — working with the subconscious mind to release old patterns
- ✓ NLP — rewiring the thought patterns and beliefs that keep you stuck

We don't just talk about what's happening. We actually change it — at the level of the nervous system, the subconscious, and the body.

*"You can't always choose what happens to you. But you can change what your body believes about it — and that changes everything."*

### Your Next Step

Book a free discovery call. It's just a conversation — no pressure, no obligation. Just an honest chat about where you're at and what's possible.

 **Book your free discovery call: [jhtherapy.au/freeoffer](https://jhtherapy.au/freeoffer)**  **[jhtherapy@outlook.com.au](mailto:jhtherapy@outlook.com.au)**  **0421 544 248**  **Warragul, VIC | Online Australia-Wide**

*I'll see you there.* 

Jess x

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