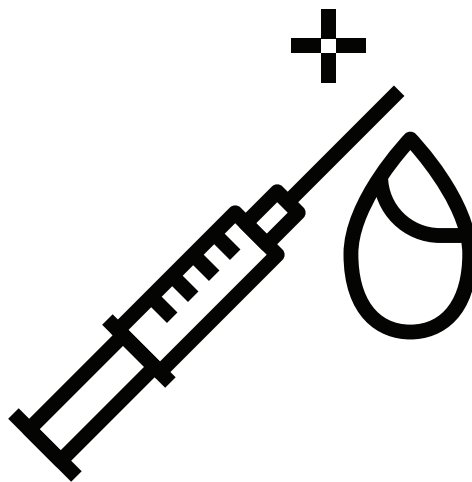


Getting to grips with Anxiety

Injection, blood and injury fears supplement



Acknowledgements

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Introduction

- This supplement is intended for use alongside the Getting to Grips with Anxiety – A Guided Self Help Manual, when you experience fainting alongside your fears of blood, injury and/or injections. It provides a technique to help you face your fears without feeling faint.

Injection, blood and injury fears

What's special about injection, blood and injury fears?

As you know if you suffer from this, some people with fears about injections and the sight of blood or injuries can feel sick and faint when in these situations.

It is ONLY these fears that can make you faint. And some people with the same fears don't faint, but only feel the panic. If you've never fainted before with injections, blood or injury, you can proceed with the getting to grips with anxiety manual as usual. It is important to remember that no other problems with anxiety make people faint, and not everyone with this particular fear faints. However, if you do, it's not at all unusual.

No-one really knows why fainting happens to some people with fears of injections, blood or injury, but it has a physical cause that you can see on the graphs on the next page.

Look at the "what is anxiety" section on pages 19-21 of the getting to grips with anxiety guided self-help manual. There are additional responses to anxiety other than fight or flight. Other responses include freezing (going blank), and fainting.

One theory is that fainting is similar to 'playing dead' that some animals use so that a predator (who one wants to eat live prey) will lose interest in them.

Another theory is that, if you are already injured, or at risk of injury, lowering your blood pressure will mean you lose blood less quickly, and so it is an adaptive response to the sight of blood and injury.

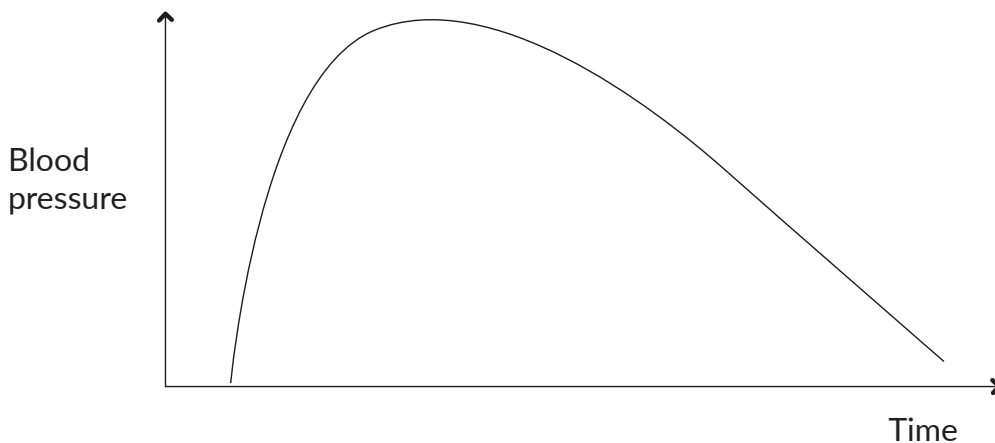
Whatever the reason, we know at one point it must have been a helpful response for survival in these situations, because otherwise you wouldn't still see it happening today so frequently.

Of course, now when we have an injection, and usually with injuries, our life is not at risk (quite the opposite with injections), and either way it is good to be awake to deal with it or get help. Fortunately, there's a simple technique you can use during exposure to help you not to faint.



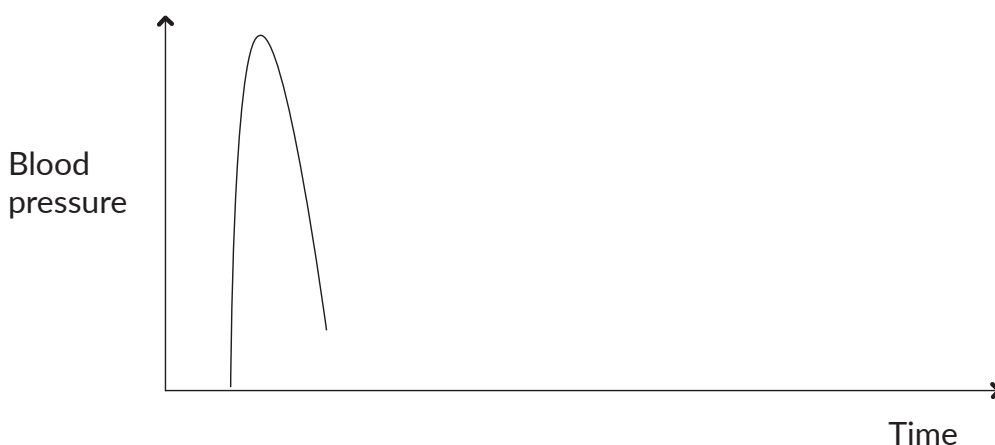
What happens in my body that makes me faint?

Normally, when we feel anxious, there is a spike in our blood pressure that enables our best fight or flight response – all those things that happen to your body, are caused by adrenalin and help you to fight your predators or escape a dangerous situation. It is completely harmless and will pass when you know there is no real danger (as you have or will practice during your graded tasks in the getting to grips with anxiety manual). See the graph below:



However, for some people with injection, blood and injury fears, although they get the same initial spike in blood pressure and sense of panic, the blood pressure then suddenly sharply drops and this can cause them to faint. See the graph below:

Blood pressure for some people with injection, blood and injury fears:



Luckily, there's a technique you can use to help prevent the sudden drop in blood pressure. It's called '**applied tension**'.

Applied tension

You need to start practising this technique with your practitioner as early as possible, when you've decided you're going to use the getting to grips with your anxiety guided self-help manual.

It's simple, but it needs a lot of practice. After you've practised it together (either in person or over the phone), make sure you practice it lots over the week. Then you'll feel much more confident to do it when you start to work on your graded tasks, or if something unexpected comes up (on TV or at school etc.)

1. Hold your arms straight either side of your body and press them into your sides tightly. You might find your shoulders raise slightly
2. Ball your fists and squeeze them tightly
3. Stand, squeezing and pressing like this for 10-15 seconds
4. Let go and pause for 20-30 seconds
5. Repeat the same five times altogether
6. Practice, practice, practice...

Remember that this technique is designed to raise your blood pressure, so if you have high blood pressure, be cautious with this technique, or get advice from your GP. This is extremely unlikely if you are a child or young person, but you can check with your back up team, and it may be that some members of your practice team should be cautious about practising this with you.

Another tip is to just let your body return to its normal state when you let go after tensing your muscles. You don't need to completely relax as this can sometimes lower your blood pressure again.

You can use this technique subtly when in unexpected feared situations, and always with the graded tasks you decide to do in discussion with your practitioner.

Who are you going to teach this technique to in your back-up team so they can practice with you? It can be helpful to set aside specific times in the week to practice. You can discuss this with your practitioner.





Video link to live demonstration:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OnQC9NhFbKMTc0t3mMQGZvNZQdKDPweH/view?usp=drivesdk>