

It's OK to be afraid

We've all had this experience: your heart is pounding, you've got butterflies in your stomach. Your hands are shaking, and your legs feel like jelly.

¹ What's the reason for this? You're scared!



Don't worry: fears are normal. It's just that for some of us, they are stronger than for others. Fear is your brain's natural way of protecting you from danger.

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This **triggers** the typical sensations that we associate with fear.

As small children, we are often **afraid** of the dark and being separated from our parents. But as we grow older, our fears become more individual. One person might be terrified of dogs; another might be **frightened** of school.

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In some cases, our fears become so extreme that they **prevent** us from living our normal lives.

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A person with a phobia of open spaces might never **venture** outside. Someone with a phobia of heights may not feel able to climb the stairs in a tall building.

Not surprisingly, it can be extremely **tough** to admit your fears.

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You might worry that other people will tease you or gossip about you.

The good news is that you aren't alone. And you can **manage** your fears through meditation, relaxation, or gradually exposing yourself to the thing you are really scared of. But first of all, you must tell someone. And if you haven't done this yet, do it today.



2 **53** Read the article. Complete it with the sentences below. Then listen and check.

- a For another person, they might be frightened of public speaking.
- b When your brain thinks you are in danger, it sends messages to your nervous system.
- c What's the reason for this?
- d You might think that they will make you look stupid.
- e When they are really extreme, we call them phobias.