
When your body needs to move

Working with restlessness and agitation

When anxiety climbs past a certain point, the body gets ready to act: to run, to get away. That energy has to go somewhere, so it comes out as pacing, standing, sitting and standing again. This isn't a failure of coping. It's a body doing what it was built to do.

Don't try to stop the movement. Shape it.

Meet the body where it is, then gradually change what it's doing. You're not trying to go from a hundred to zero; you're trying to go from a hundred to ninety, then eighty.

When it's at its worst

- **Walk it down.** At whatever pace your body wants; fast is fine. After a few minutes, let the pace drop very slightly. Then a bit more.
- **Push against something solid.** Palms on a wall, lean in and push hard. Rest, and repeat. Often the quickest thing here.
- **Carry something heavy:** a bag with some books in it, or a weighted blanket over your shoulders, and walk with it.
- **Stairs.** Up and down: the effort, the rhythm, the change of view.
- **Let your eyes work as you walk.** Let your gaze land on a tree, a roofline, something far off, then move on.

When it starts to ease

A long breath, a yawn, shoulders dropping: time to change gear rather than stop.

- **Find a rhythm:** walking, swaying, rocking.
- **Pick a destination:** a tree, a bench, the end of the street. Walk there and back. Choosing where you go turns it into something you're doing.
- **Notice one place that's okay,** such as the soles of your feet or your hands. Rest there for a few seconds, then let your attention go where it wants. Come back to it later.

Other things that help

Deep pressure (a weighted blanket, wrapping up tightly), rocking or swaying, something to squeeze or knead, and dim light with less noise. Yoga can help too, if it's the kind where you're invited rather than instructed. And there's walking meditation.

The part of you that needs to move

Somewhere underneath the pacing, something is trying to look after you. Afterwards, you might ask it: *What are you worried about? What are you trying to protect me from?* You don't have to find answers. Asking with curiosity rather than frustration tends to change the temperature a little.