



# Panic Attack Coping Plan

*What panic is, why it can't hurt you, and your step-by-step plan to ride it out.*

A panic attack is your body's alarm firing when there's no real danger. The racing heart, tight chest, dizziness and tingling are the harmless effects of adrenaline — the same fight-or-flight response that would help you escape a true threat. It feels frightening, but it is not dangerous, it always peaks and passes (usually within about ten minutes), and the sensations themselves cannot harm you.

## In the moment: ride the wave

- Name it: “This is panic. It's adrenaline. It will pass.”
- Slow your breathing — in for 4, out for 6. Longer out-breaths calm the alarm.
- Drop the struggle: don't fight the feelings; let the wave rise and fall on its own.
- Ground in the present: feel your feet, name what you can see and hear around you.
- Stay put if you can — leaving teaches your brain the place was dangerous. Wait for it to ease.

## My personal coping card

*Fill this in, then photograph it or cut it out to keep in your wallet or on your phone.*

**My early signs a panic attack is starting**

**My calming steps, in order**

**True, steady things to tell myself**