

# expressyourself



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With increasing uncertainty surrounding jobs, health and finances, anxiety levels are understandably climbing. But could shaking therapy be the new way to shrug off stress this winter? **Kim Jones** discovers the best therapies around

**D**eep breathing, meditation, mindfulness – many of us are seeking out relaxation methods to reduce feelings of worry in these tough times.

But what if tackling stress was less about lying back and more about giving ourselves a good old shake?

Animals instinctively shake from head to toe after life-threatening events to release adrenaline and cortisol, and restore the body to balance. Even humans involuntarily shake after distressing episodes.

"Shaking is a normal, inherent response to extreme stress, such as being in an accident or having an argument with someone," says Steve Haines, a trauma release exercise trainer ([trecollege.com](http://trecollege.com)).

While we may naturally shake after a traumatic event, we're not so good at discharging the everyday stresses that build up in us over time.

"Under stress, our bodies go into fight or flight," says Steve. "Our muscles tense, our heart rate increases, our guts contract and we release cortisol – a response designed to help us escape an enemy."

This stress response should only last for a short period, but unless we find a release for it, it can stay switched on and build up in our bodies, contributing to health problems such as high blood pressure and heart disease.

Here's where making ourselves shake can help. We can tune into an in-built mechanism that can help uncork the pressure of everything we're bottling up inside.

"Shaking is a natural way to release exaggerated muscle tension, reboot the nervous system and stop us bracing ourselves against life," says Steve. "It can also help wake up our bodies and generate feelings of joy and ease."

If you fancy trying it, here are some shaking therapies to sample:

## TENSION AND TRAUMA RELEASING EXERCISES (TRE)

Created by Dr David Berceci, an expert in trauma intervention, TRE classes are made up of a series of exercises that activate natural tremors in the body to help let go of trauma and tension. Reported benefits include lower stress and anxiety, as well as reduced symptoms



NATURAL TRE lowers stress

of post-traumatic stress disorder and better sleep.

Classes begin with a series of exercises designed to stretch and tire the legs and pelvis, including heel raises (going on to tip toes), controlled squats and lunges.

After about 10 to 15 minutes of exercising your leg muscles, lie on the floor. Now bend your knees, bring the soles of your feet together and open your knees wide until you are in the 'butterfly' position. Next, lift your bottom and hips from the floor about one to two inches and hold this position for a minute. Return your hips to the floor, then bring your knees together in small movements, one inch at a time, holding each position for up to two minutes. You should feel your legs and hips tremor, and perhaps your stomach and chest too.

The degree of shake varies from person to person. Stay in the tremor position for five to 10 minutes, but if you want to stop shaking, place your legs flat on the floor.

Over time, you should be able to initiate shaking by going straight into butterfly position without having to do the preparatory leg exercises.

● For classes, visit [trecollege.com](http://trecollege.com)

## QIGONG SHAKING

"Gentle shaking can help get your Qi (vital energy) flowing smoothly through the body, which in turn helps release stress from the nervous system," says Qigong teacher Poppy Fraser.



QIGONG TEACHER Poppy

"Start by standing with feet shoulder width apart, feeling grounded into the earth. Begin shaking your hands, wrists and arms, one by one and then together.

"It's a gentle movement but you want to get the sensation of the flesh being loose, off the body, as if separated from the muscles and tendons, like bags of water off the bones.

"Breathe freely, in through the nose, out through the mouth. When your arms feel loose and released, lift your heels off the floor either alternately or together, and gently bounce, moving your head and arms at the same time.

"Doing this for more than 30 seconds and up to a couple of minutes will revitalise the body, release stress and give a feeling of renewed energy and calm.

"It's a super-charged, speedy stress-busting hack."

● For classes, visit [poppyfraser.co.uk](http://poppyfraser.co.uk)

## KUNDALINI YOGA

"Kundalini yoga classes include breathwork (pranayama), a set of exercises (kriya), deep relaxation, often with accompaniment of the gong, and meditation," says Jessica Banks, Kundalini yoga teacher. "But classes can also include more physically rigorous kriyas which strengthen the body, nervous and immune systems.

"If you shake something physically it breaks up, so the idea is by shaking our limbs wildly we release or break up stress and tension in the body."

Start by sitting on the floor, legs crossed. Raise your arms and with elbows bent shake them and your whole upper body vigorously for about seven minutes.

Next, stand up and begin shaking your hips from side to side. Then shake your whole body energetically – pumping your arms, twisting, dancing and jumping.

"This is about shaking your limbs wildly, making your body vibrate, working up a sweat and really letting yourself go," says Jessica.

"Try not to repeat the same movement, smile as you shake and focus on the movement of your limbs. After, you should feel as if you've had a full massage."



RELEASE TENSION Jessica

● For classes, visit [joy.yoga](http://joy.yoga)



LET YOURSELF GO Kundalini yoga

# Shake it off!

## SHAKING REALLY HELPS CLEAR AWAY THE COBWEBS AND RELEASES STRESS

Tara Rai, 27, an art workshop facilitator from South London, says:



“ Since the pandemic began, I've felt stressed because of the lack of human interaction. I

came across shaking as a concept to help discharge emotions in Jeff Brown's book, *Grounded Spirituality*.

I investigated and discovered TRE classes, which were being hosted online. I found the trembling really calming and energising.

Now I do the butterfly pose in the morning, three to four times a week, for about 15 minutes.

It helps clear away the cobwebs and releases stress. I also have more patience with others too.

I'm so convinced by the therapy that I'm now training to become a TRE teacher myself.