# Trauma and the body

How trauma shows up in the body, and physical ways to help it settle.

Trauma affects the body as well as the mind. When the danger has passed but your body stays on alert, the strain shows up physically.

## How it can show

- Muscles that stay tense: jaw, neck, shoulders, back
- Headaches, stomach and bowel problems
- A racing heart, or feeling short of breath
- Being easily startled
- Exhaustion that sleep does not fix
- Feeling numb or cut off from parts of the body
- Pain with no clear medical cause

These are real, physical effects of a nervous system that has been on guard for too long. They are not imagined. It is still important to have new or persistent symptoms checked by your GP.

## Helping the body settle

**Breath**
A slow, long out-breath tells the body the emergency is over.

**Movement**
Walking, stretching, swimming, yoga. Rhythm and repetition are calming.

**Temperature**
A warm shower or a cool cloth can shift your state quickly.

**Touch and pressure**
A weighted blanket, a firm self-hug, hands pressed together.

**Releasing tension**
Tense and release muscle groups one at a time.

**Rest**
Real rest, not scrolling. Lying down with your eyes closed counts.

## If your body does not feel safe

Go slowly. Start with neutral areas: hands, feet, the feeling of the chair. Short and often is better than long and overwhelming.

**Where I carry tension, pain or numbness**

**What helps my body settle**

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