



# GUIDE TO HEALTH

Project with multiple beneficiaries under the ERASMUS+ Programme

## **Guide to health**

Integrative tools to manage children's anxiety (in school): guiding light to better mental health

Project code:

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# Physical Activity and Exercise: Protective Tools Against Anxiety Disorders

Discover how physical activity serves as a shield against anxiety. Exercise, a form of physical activity, plays a central role in alleviating anxiety symptoms. Join us to explore the protective benefits of exercise.

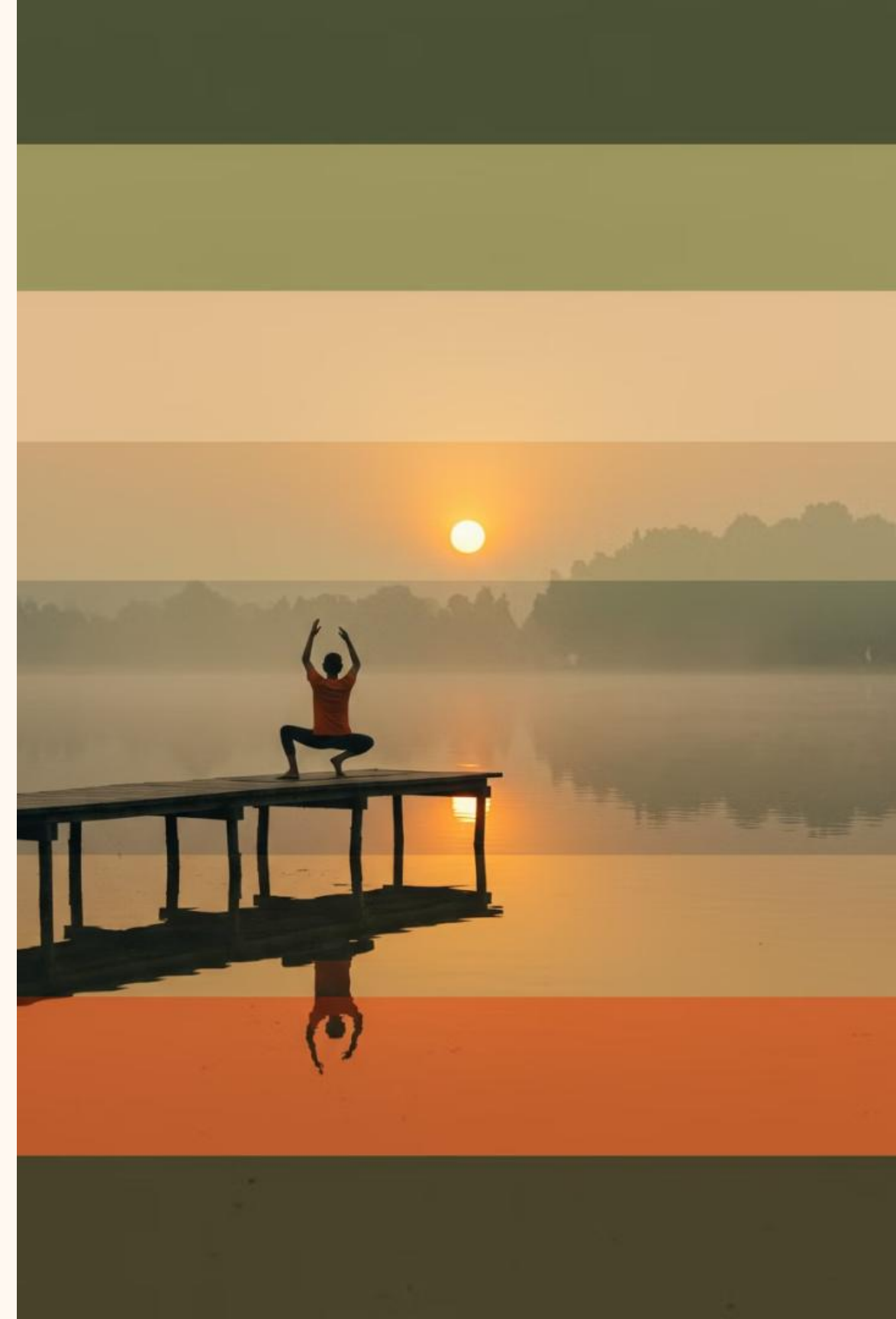
● *Sofia Psarra*

*Psychologist Bsc. (Hons)*

*MSc in Trauma and Disaster Management Studies*

*(Clinical Psychology)*

*AQA in Counselling Skills*



# Introduction: Defining Terms & Understanding Anxiety

## Physical Activity vs. Exercise

Physical activity encompasses any bodily movement. Exercise is structured, repetitive physical activity.

## Prevalence of Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders are common globally. They affect millions, impacting daily life. Early intervention is crucial.

## Importance of Interventions

Non-pharmacological interventions like exercise are vital. They offer holistic health benefits and anxiety reduction.

# The Anxiety-Physical Activity Relationship

## 1 Inverse Correlation

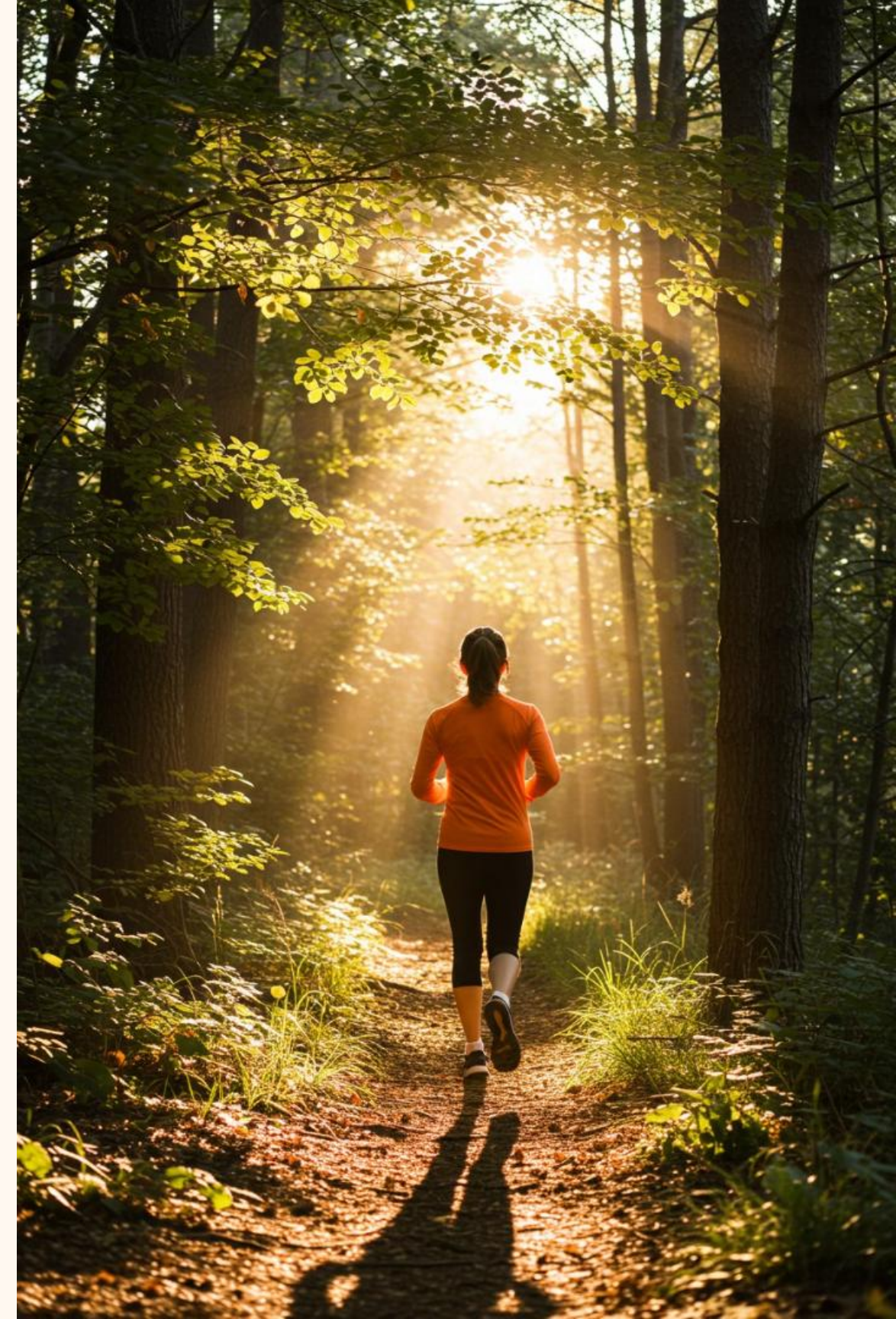
Higher physical activity links to lower anxiety levels.

## 2 Epidemiological Evidence

Studies consistently show the anxiety-reducing effects of physical activity.

## 3 Potential Mechanisms

Physiological and psychological pathways are involved. Neurotransmitters and self-perception play roles.





# Physiological Effects of Exercise on Anxiety

## Reduced Nervous System Activity

Exercise lowers the sympathetic nervous system response.

## Changes in HPA Axis

Exercise modulates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, reducing stress hormones.

## Neurotransmitter Alterations

Exercise influences serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins, improving mood.



# Psychological Effects of Exercise on Anxiety



## Increased Self-Efficacy

Achieving fitness goals boosts confidence.



## Distraction

Exercise provides a break from anxious thoughts.



## Improved Self-Esteem

Positive body image enhances mental wellbeing.



# Exercise as a Preventive Tool: Non-clinical Populations

## Reduced Risk

Regular exercise lowers the chance of developing anxiety.

1

2

## Improved Resilience

Exercise enhances the ability to cope with stress.

## Enhanced Wellbeing

Exercise boosts overall mental health and life satisfaction.

3



# Exercise in Clinical Populations: Anxiety Disorders

1

## Effective Symptom Reduction

Exercise decreases anxiety symptoms in clinical settings.

2

## Comparison

Exercise can be as effective as traditional treatments.

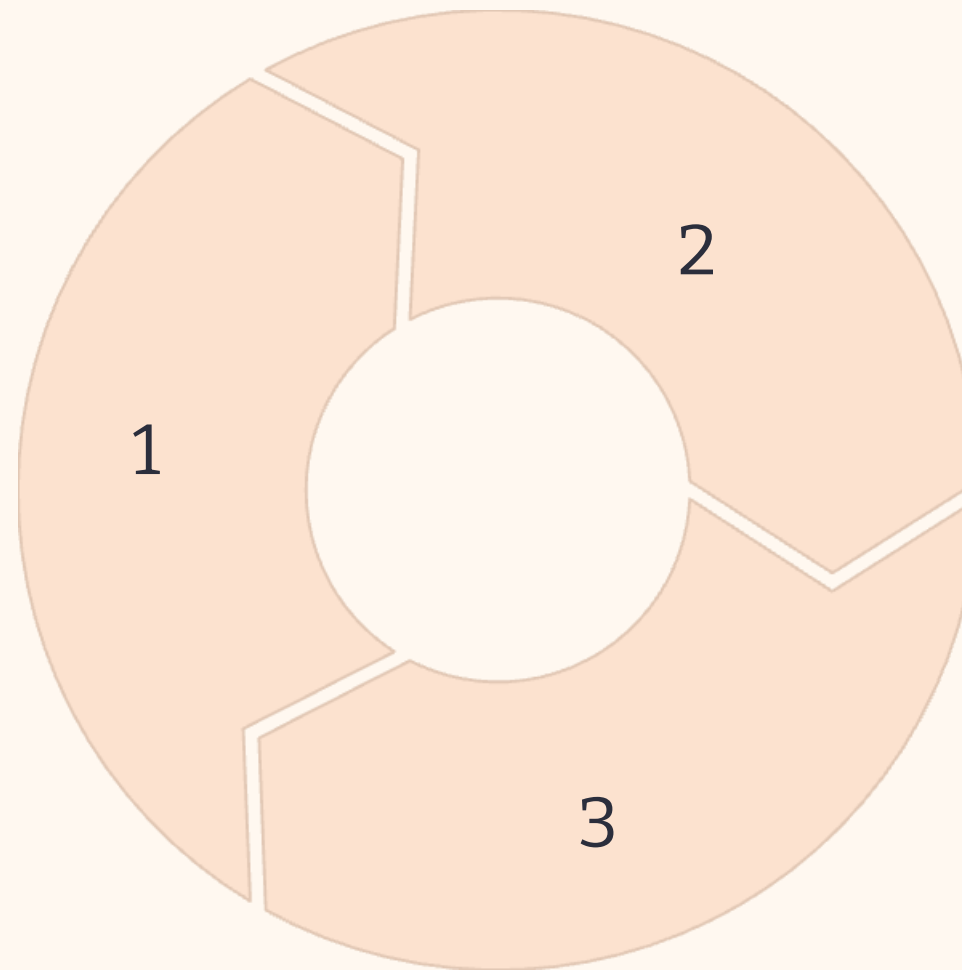
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## Adjunct Therapy

Exercise complements other anxiety treatments.

# Types of Physical Activity and Their Effects

**Aerobic**  
Running, swimming improves cardiovascular health and reduces anxiety.



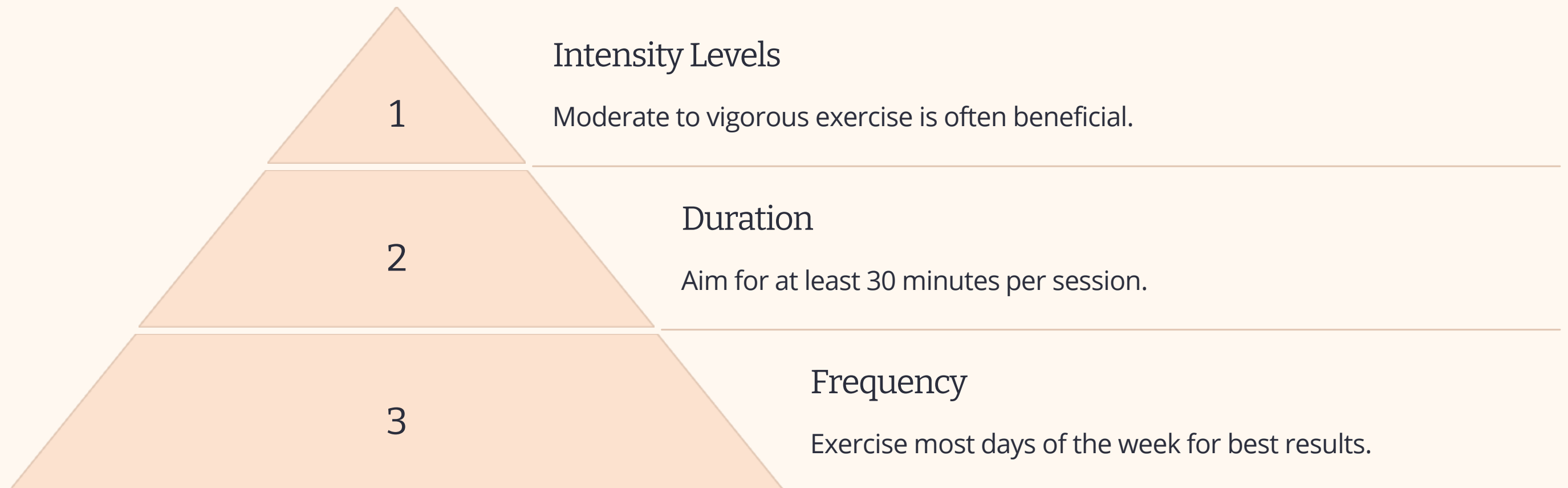
**Resistance**

Weightlifting increases strength and improves mood.

**Mind-Body**

Yoga, Tai Chi promote relaxation and reduce stress.

# Dose-Response Relationship: Finding Your Balance



# Anxiety Sensitivity and Exercise

1

## Definition

Fear of anxiety-related physical sensations.

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2

## Reduction

Exercise helps manage these sensations.

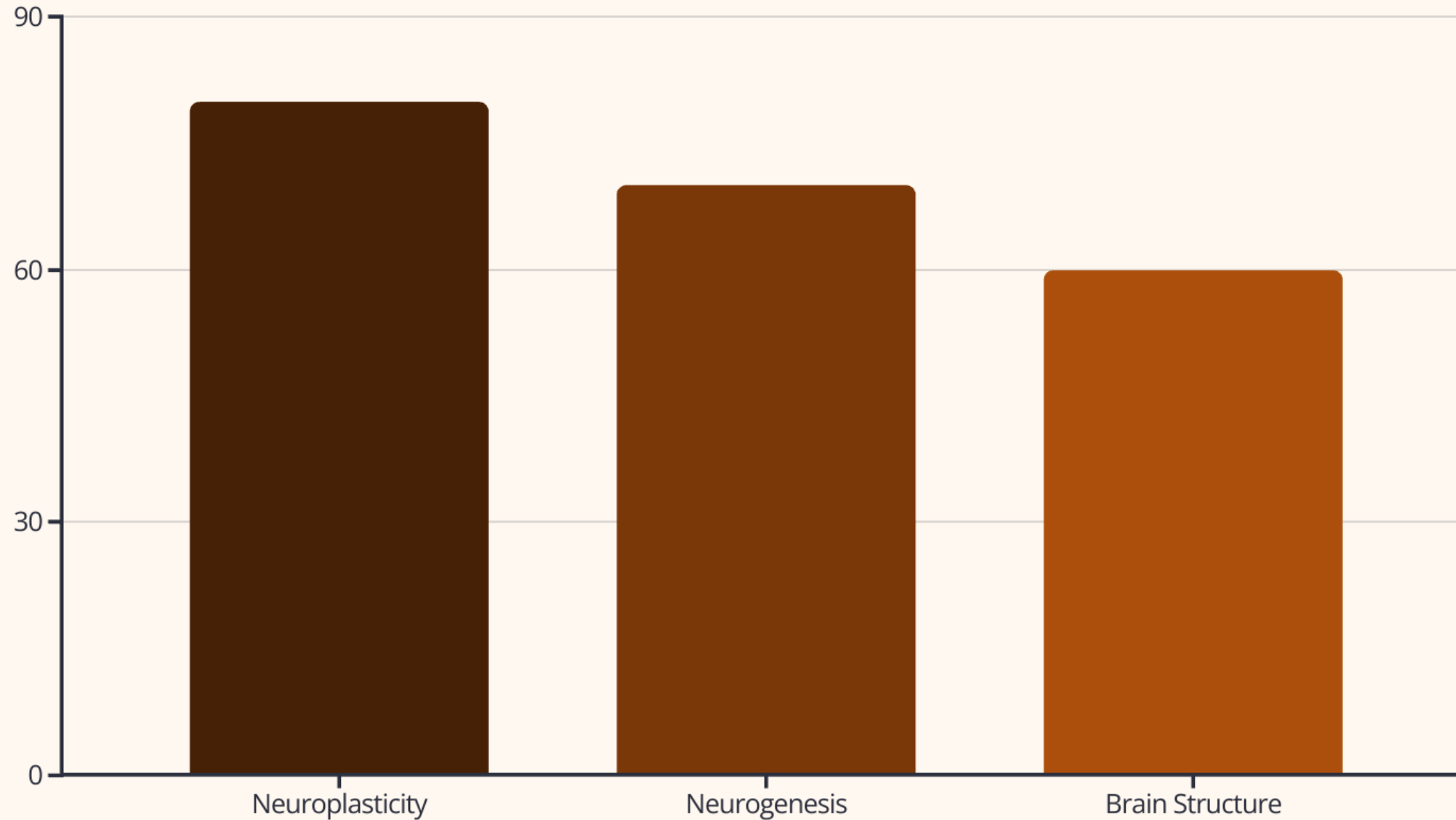
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## Long-Term Effects

Reduced sensitivity lowers anxiety.

# Neurobiological Mechanisms



Exercise positively alters the brain. It increases neuroplasticity and neurogenesis. Changes in brain structure and function also occur.

# Exercise and Specific Anxiety Disorders

## GAD

Generalised Anxiety Disorder  
symptoms reduce with regular exercise.

## Panic Disorder

Exercise helps manage panic attacks.

## Social Anxiety

Group exercise increases confidence  
and reduces social fears.



# Exercise Prescription for Anxiety: Customised Plans

## 1 Individualised

Exercise plans should suit personal needs and preferences.

## 2 Considerations

Age, health, and anxiety type influence exercise choices.

## 3 Precautions

Start slowly and monitor physical and emotional responses.

# Barriers to Exercise in Anxious Individuals

## Fear of Sensations

Physical symptoms of anxiety deter exercise.

## Low Self-Efficacy

Lack of confidence hinders participation.

## Avoidance

Anxiety leads to avoiding physical activity.



# Strategies to Overcome Barriers



## Gradual Exposure

Slowly increase exercise intensity.



## Education

Understand physical sensations.



## Social Support

Join group activities.



# Combining Exercise with Other Treatments

1

CBT

Exercise enhances cognitive-behavioural therapy outcomes.

2

Medication

Exercise may reduce medication needs.

3

Synergy

Combined treatments offer better results.



# Long-term Adherence to Exercise

1

## Influencing Factors

Motivation, support, and enjoyment are critical.

2

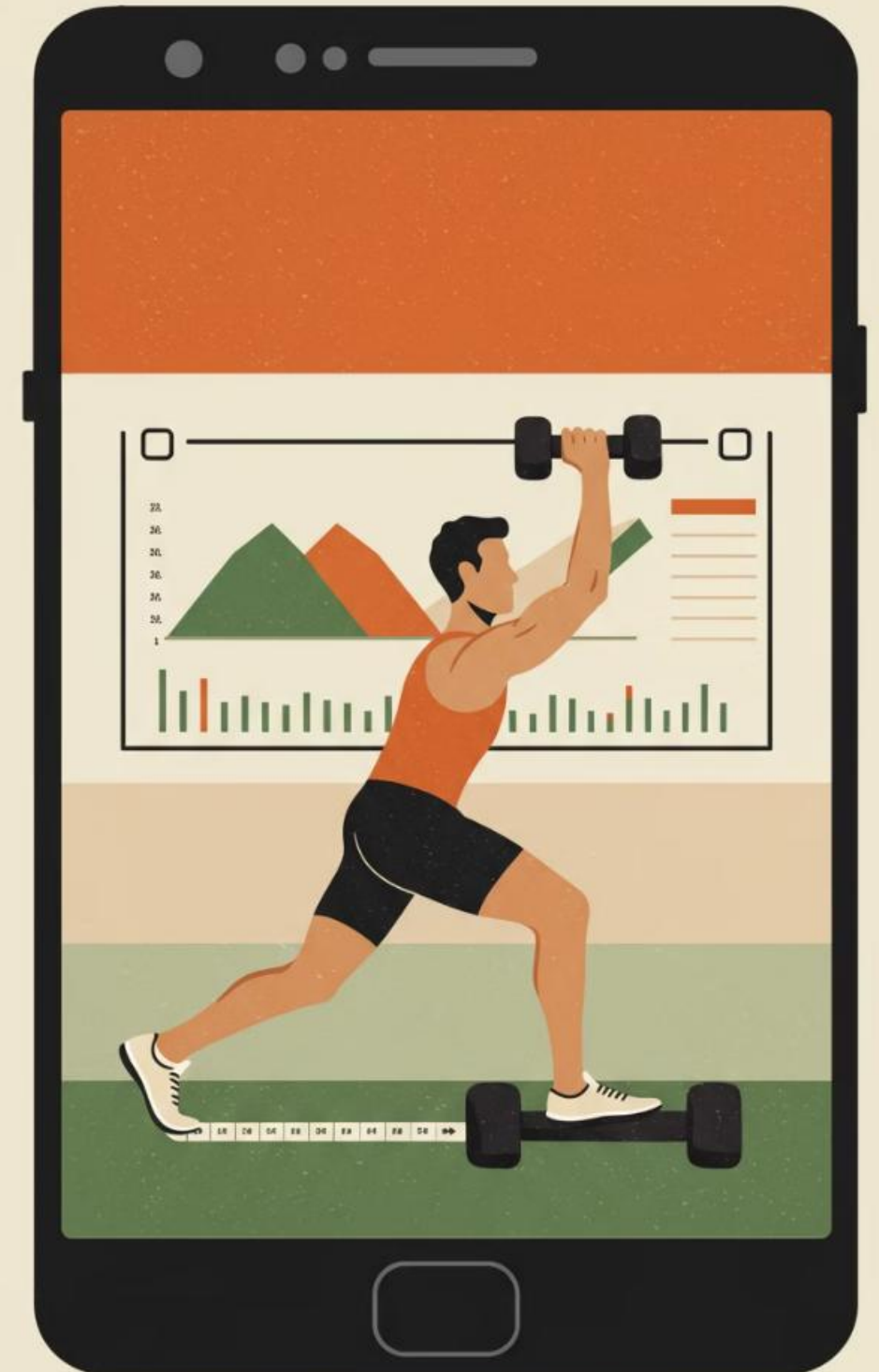
## Maintaining Motivation

Set goals, track progress, and find enjoyable activities.

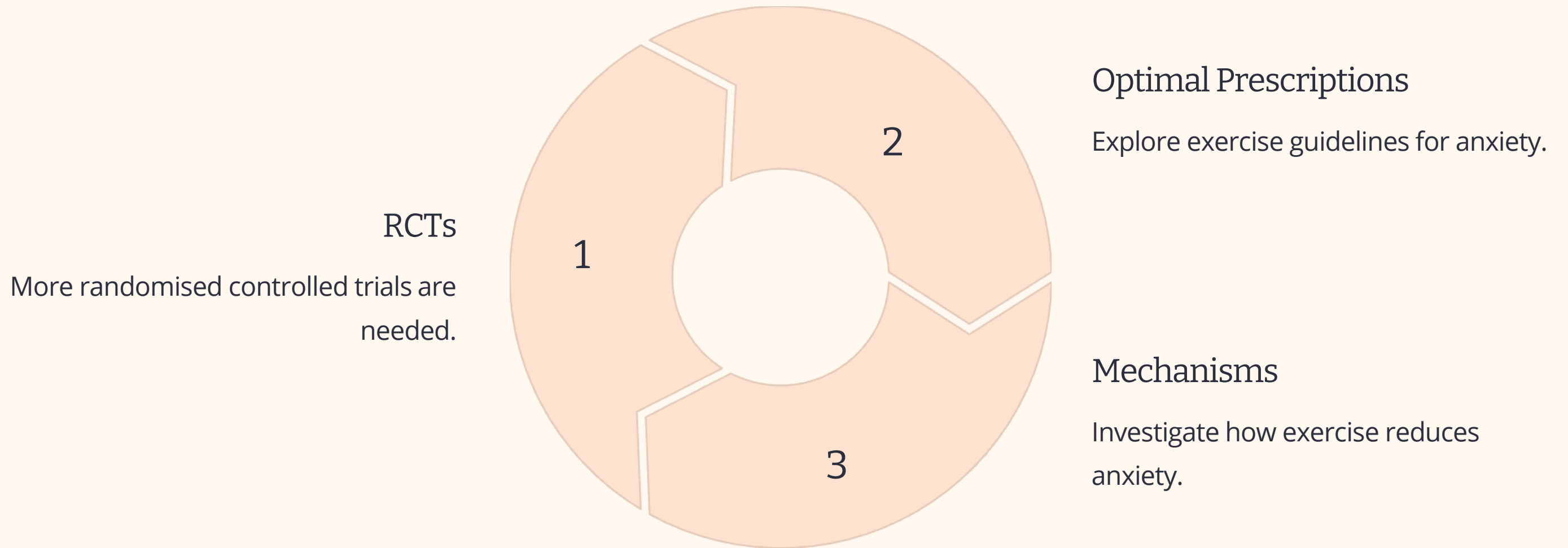
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## Healthcare Role

Professionals provide guidance and encouragement.



# Future Directions in Research



# Practical Implications



## Healthcare Providers

Promote exercise as a treatment option.



## Mental Health Professionals

Integrate exercise into treatment plans.

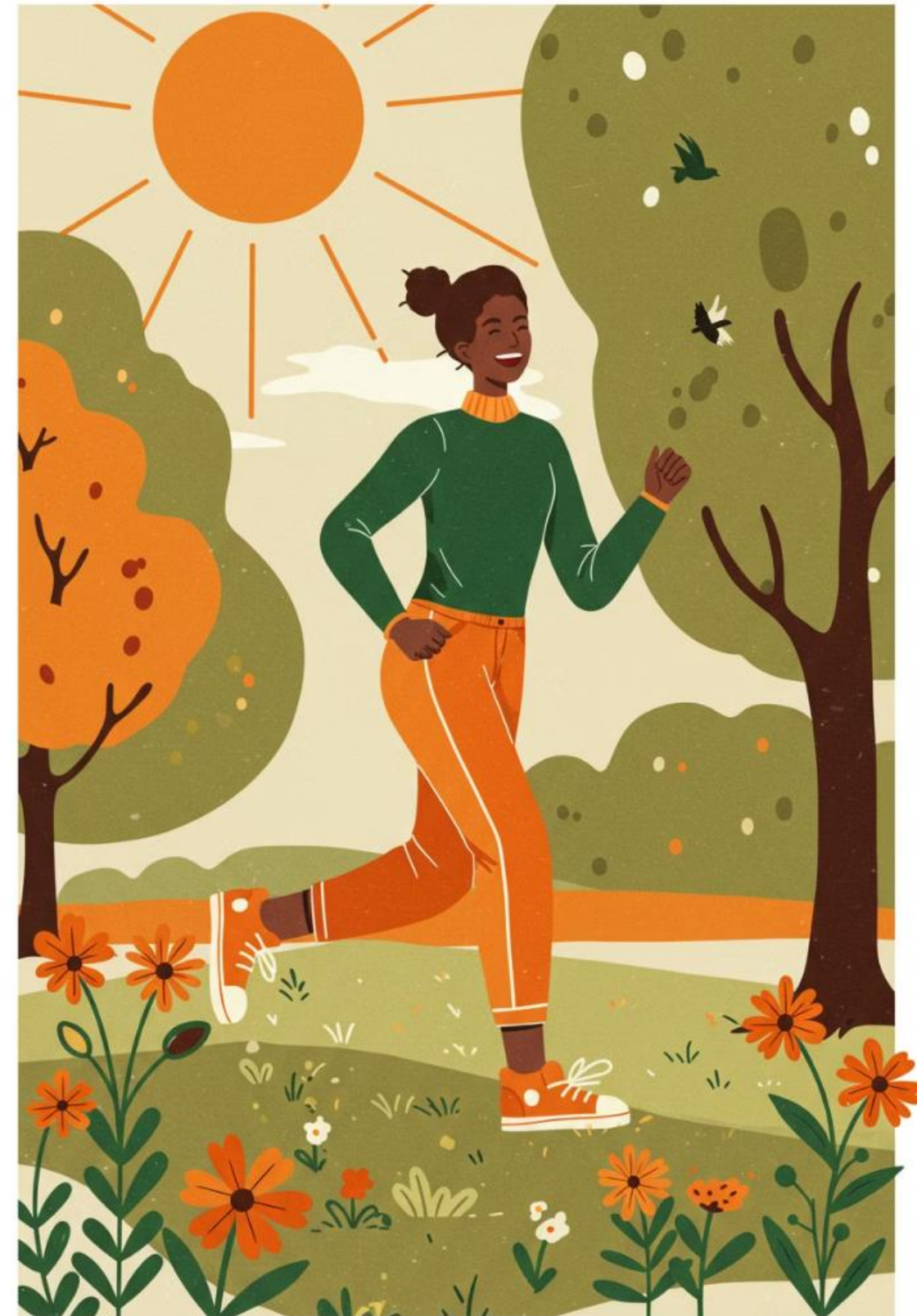


## Individuals with Anxiety

Incorporate regular physical activity.

# Conclusion: Embrace Physical Activity

Physical activity and exercise are powerful tools against anxiety. Implementing these strategies can improve mental wellbeing. Further research will enhance our understanding and application.



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Partners:

Qualitas T & G Tanácsadó és Szolgáltató Kft (Szeged, HU) | Agrupamento de Escolas de Arrifana (Santa Maria da Feira, PT) |  
6o Gymnasio (Patras, GR) | Istituto Comprensivo (Perugia, IT)

Coordinator:

QUALITAS T & G Tanácsadó és Szolgáltató Kft