

BREATHE

Experiencing Mindfulness

Breathing slowly and rhythmically makes your body feel like it does when you are relaxed. This sends a message to your brain to calm down. Focusing on your breathing can also reduce your sense of stress by clearing your mind of negative thoughts.

Belly breathing

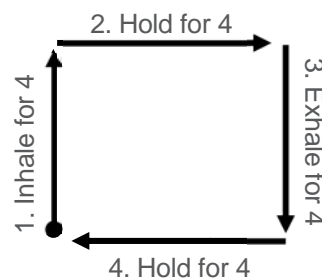
- > Find a relaxed, comfortable position. Keep your back straight, but not tight. Put a hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other on your chest.
- > Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out as the muscles relax. Your chest should not move.
- > Hold that breath for a moment, then breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Straighten the back. Let belly muscles tighten. Feel the hand on your belly go in.
- > Take your time with each breath. Try to increase each in and out breath. Notice where you feel your breath in your body – chest, abdomen, nostrils.
- > Your mind may wander. That's OK. Just notice the wandering and gently redirect your attention back to your breathing.
- > Do this 5 to 10 times.

Breathing meditation

- > Relax. Allow the body and mind to settle. Do what helps you become comfortable. Create a stable base for yourself. Gently allow eyes to close.
- > Take a few complete, deep breaths, in and out. Then trust the breath to continue on its own.
- > Notice where your breath is most obvious in the body. It may be the movement of your belly or chest or a sensation beneath your nostrils.
- > As you breathe in, focus on connecting with things as they are. As you breathe out, focus on accepting and/or releasing.

Square breathing

- > Find a comfortable position. Take several slow natural breaths. Close your eyes and picture a square. Choose one corner to be your starting point.
- > Count slowly to four as you inhale through your nose. Picturing your breath moving up one side of the square. You can also trace an outline of a square with your finger.
- > Then count slowly to four as you hold your breath and visualize moving across the next side.
- > Then move down next side; count slowly to four while exhaling.
- > Then hold without breathing in or out for a count of four on the last side.
- > Repeat 2 to 4 times.



- > It's OK if your mind wanders. When you become aware, that's a moment of mindfulness! Note what has happened and gently guide your thoughts back to your breath. It's always OK to begin again.
- > Continue to focus on your in and out breaths for several minutes.
- > Then wiggle your fingers and toes and gently open your eyes. Take your time to adjust. Note your experience. Notice any difference between when you began and now.



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