

— CALM DOWN TOOLS

6 Breathing Techniques to Help You Relax



Slow breathing tells your nervous system it is safe. Start with these six simple techniques and keep the ones that work for you.

1 4 x 4 Square Breathing

Breathe in for a count of four. Hold for four. Breathe out for four. Hold for four. Picture tracing the four sides of a square as you go.

2 4-7-8 Breathing

Empty your lungs. Inhale through your nose for a count of 4. Hold your breath for a count of 7. Exhale through your mouth with a whooshing sound for a count of 8.

3 Alternate Nostril Breathing

Close your right nostril with your right thumb and inhale slowly through the left. Pinch both nostrils closed and hold. Release the right side and exhale, then inhale through the right. Pinch closed again, open the left and exhale. Rest a moment before the next round.

4 Relaxing Sigh

As you inhale, pull your shoulders up toward your ears and hold your breath. Then sigh with a strong exhale as you push your shoulders back down.

5 Lion Breath

Sit cross-legged or kneel. Rest your hands on your knees with your fingers spread. Breathe in through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth with a "ha," opening your mouth wide and stretching your tongue toward your chin. Repeat six times.

6 Belly Breathing

Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly. Breathe in slowly through your nose so the hand on your belly rises while the hand on your chest stays still. Breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat five times.