Breathing Exercises

Simple breathing exercises are some of the most effective strategies for reducing stress and anxiety. For optimum results, find a comfortable position, and take a few moments everyday to practice self-care.



Cooling Breaths

1. Sit in a comfortable position and open your mouth slightly. Curl the sides of your tongue to make a small tunnel shape.
2. If curling your tongue is difficult, try touching the sides of your tongue to your upper lip.
3. Breathe in slowly through the tunnel shape (you should feel a cool rush of breath).
4. Hold your breath for a moment, exhale slowly through your nose.
5. Repeat 5-10 times.



Pairing Breath with Reassuring Thoughts

1. Syncing breathing to positive thoughts can help soothe emotional stress. Breathe in an affirmation (i.e.: "I inhale peace", "I inhale relaxation") and breathe out a stressor (i.e. "I exhale worry", "I exhale anxiety").
2. The specific reassuring thoughts can be adjusted to meet whatever feelings you are having in the moment.

Tip

Taking the time to focus on our breath and have positive thoughts are good techniques to further practice self-awareness and stress relief.



365 Method

1. Three times a day, breathe six breath cycles per minute for five minutes.
2. One breath cycle means to inhale for 5 seconds and exhale for 5 seconds.
3. Practice this technique every day (365 days) for maximum benefit.

Tip

This breathing method can bring immediate feelings of relaxation.

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Alternate Nostril Breathing

1. Gently applying pressure to one nostril with your thumb, breathe in and out slowly through the opened nostril.
2. Continue inhaling and exhaling from the open nostril, keeping the thumb on the opposite nostril to remain closed.
3. This method will slow the rhythm of your breath.
4. After completing a few breaths holding one nostril, switch and apply pressure to the alternate nostril.



Belly Breaths

1. Inhale and breathe into your belly rather than your chest, feel the lower part of your diaphragm, just above your belly button, filling with air like a balloon.
2. Exhale slowly.
3. Repeat 5-10 times.

Tip

This technique draws away tension in the chest and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system to rest and digest.



Box Breathing

1. Slowly and deeply inhale through your nose while counting up to 4. Then hold your breath for another slow 4 counts and slowly release the air with an exhale through your mouth while again slowly counting to 4.
2. Hold your breath after the exhale for another 4 counts before starting the box breath again.
3. During these "box" cycles, be conscious of the air entering and exiting your body.



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