

5 BREATH TECHNIQUES

AT YOUR DESK, IN THE LAB, OR ON THE GO

Do not underestimate the power of the breath to calm the body and brain down from a stressful encounter or event. Proper breathing sends a signal to the brain to let it know that there is no real danger. In turn the brain begins to reduce its stress response by slowing the heart and breath rate. The brain tells the body to move into a mode of rest and digest. Literally moving away from a stress response and back to a set point improves the digestive system. Being in a calm state also allows for better digestion of information to make decisions with ease and focus.

Try the methods below to experiment with different breath techniques that can be executed in any moment. If any resonate with you, work with it daily for instance before checking email, answering the phone, or entering a meeting.

1. Lazy 8 Breath

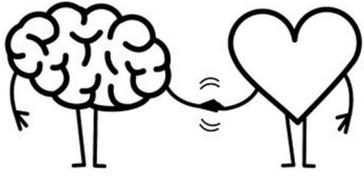


Imagine the number 8 laying on its side. Place your awareness in the center. As you inhale mentally trace one circle of the 8. As you cross through the center again, slowly exhale out. Repeat tracing the symbol in your head. Lazy 8 breathing evens out the inhalation and exhalation which can aid emotional and self-regulation.

2. 4-7-8 Breath



Through your nose inhale to the count of 4; hold your breath to the count of 7; exhale through your mouth to the count of 8. Repeat this breath cycle a few times. If using the format 4-7-8 is too challenging reduce the format to 2 breaths in, 3 breaths hold, 4 breaths out. Doubling the exhalation can allow for deeper breaths to occur which can reduce anxiety.



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3. Take 5



Place your hand in your lap or out in front of you. Inhale and with the opposite hand trace your thumb from the palm to the tip; at the tip pause the breath for a moment, continue tracing down the thumb as you exhale, pause at the bottom for a moment. Continue this motion until the entire hand has been traced. Inhale up, pause, exhale down, pause. By the end you have taken 5 deep breaths. This can help reduce the stress response and return your body into balance.

4. 27 Breath Meditation



Sitting comfortably or laying down close your eyes or keep a soft fuzzy gaze. During the 27 breath meditation you will count your breaths down from 27 to 1. If at anytime you forget your count or loose track due to distractions, start again at 27. Breathing in 27, breathing out 26, breathing in 25, breathing out 24... until you get to 1. The 27 breath meditation can reduce the stress response while also cultivating awareness and focus for a sharper mind.

5. 16 Seconds of Bliss



Created by meditation teacher davidji, 16 seconds of bliss offers the execution of a very quick calming response which due to the time is also almost impossible to have a distracting thought, feeling, or emotion at the same time. This method uses all four parts of the breath. Take a deep breath in to the count of 4, pause your breath to the count of 4, exhale to the count of 4, then pause for a count of 4. Repeat the method 4 times and you have breathed for just over 1 minute.