

Relieve Stress in the Moment



How are you breathing right now? Are your breaths slow and deep, or short and shallow? You probably won't be surprised to hear that deep breathing is a proven tactic to relieve stress. But it may be tough to take a break and practice deep breathing. So here's your chance! Slow down for just a moment, tap into your breath, and give yourself a tool to find your focus — whenever, wherever.

TRY DEEP BREATHING

Fill your lungs with air, slowly counting to 4 as you breathe in. Hold your breath for another 4 counts, then release the air slowly over another 4 counts. Try this for several rounds of breath.

When you've finished, check in with yourself. Ask yourself: How am I breathing now? How do I feel? Do I notice any different sensations in my body or my mind?

CHANGE IT UP

If you have trouble slowing down your breathing at first, try these tricks:

Gently close one nostril with a finger. This will halve your air supply in and out, forcing you to inhale and exhale more slowly.

Lie flat on your back. This position we normally reserve for sleep can naturally signal your brain to slow down your respiration.

Breathe deep into your belly. This activates your vagus nerve, telling your body in its own language that everything is going to be okay.

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