

Mindfulness breathing exercises to help deal with stress and anxiety

Breath focus helps you concentrate on slow, deep breathing and aids you in disengaging from distracting thoughts and sensations.

4-7-8 Breathing

Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds. This breathing pattern aims to reduce anxiety or help people get to sleep.

Quieting response

Relax all the muscles in your face and shoulders and imagine having holes in the soles of your feet.

1. Take a deep breath, visualizing the breath as hot air entering the body through the holes in the soles of the feet.
2. Imagine the hot air flowing up the legs, through the abdomen, and then filling the lungs.
3. Relax each muscle as the hot air passes it.
4. Breathe out slowly, imagining the air passing from the lungs back into the abdomen, then the legs, before leaving the body through the holes in the soles of the feet.
5. Repeat until calm.

Mindful breathing

You should sit or lie in a comfortable position with your eyes open or closed.

1. Inhale through the nose until the abdomen expands.
2. Slowly let the breath out through the mouth.
3. Once settled into the pattern, focus on the breath coming in through the nose and out through the mouth.
4. Notice the rise and fall of the abdomen as the breaths come in and out.
5. As thoughts come into the head, notice that they are there without judgment, then let them go and bring the attention back to the breathing.
6. Carry on until feeling calm, then start to be aware of how the body and mind feel.