



BREATHING TECHNIQUES TO HELP YOU RELAX

RELAXING IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE - THESE SIMPLE EXERCISES CAN HELP YOU UNWIND.

4-7-8 BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Inhaling, holding the breath, and exhaling for specific amounts of time is another technique you can use in correlation with deep breathing which works as a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system ([Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, PDF](#)). It can be helpful to think about relaxing while inhaling and letting go of stress while exhaling.

Try 4:7:8 Breathing:

Inhale for 4 seconds,
Hold for 7 seconds,
Exhale for 8 seconds.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING (DEEP BREATHING)

Deep breathing is one of the most widely referenced breathing techniques. This technique relaxes you by allowing more oxygen to enter your body. According to the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#), deep breathing can be used for everyday relaxation as well as feelings of severe anxiety or panic that can arise from PTSD or panic attacks.

The VA provides the following instructions for diaphragmatic breathing:

1. Sit comfortably or lie down. Place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose.
3. Feel your stomach expand as you inhale. If you are breathing from the stomach, the hand on your chest shouldn't move. Focus on filling up your lower lungs with air.
4. Slowly exhale, releasing all the air out through your mouth. Use your hand to feel your stomach fall as you exhale.
5. Practice breathing four to six breaths per minute (about one full inhale and exhale per 10-15 seconds).
6. Repeat this up to 10 times.

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

This breathing technique from yoga can reduce anxiety and help you focus. Practicing it takes some concentration, which is one of the reasons it is helpful — your mind has something to focus on other than stressful thoughts ([Harvard Health Publishing](#)).

Here are some instructions for trying this technique from Harvard Health Publishing:

1. Sit in a comfortable position and place your left hand on your left knee.
2. Lift your right hand up and place your right thumb on your right nostril to close your right nostril.
3. Inhale through your left nostril.
4. Use your right index finger to close the left nostril, briefly closing both nostrils at once.
5. Open the right nostril and exhale through the right side.
6. Inhale through the right nostril and then close this nostril using your thumb.
7. Open the left nostril and exhale through the left side.
8. Continue these cycles for up to five minutes.