

B R E A T H T A K I N G

Intentional Breathing for Health and Relaxation

When we are healthy, we breathe automatically and don't have to think about it. The act of breathing integrates mind, body, and spirit and, like our heartbeats, provides the soundtrack of our lives. But sometimes that soundtrack is out of sync with what is happening in our lives and we need to change the music.

We breathe more quickly and shallowly when we experience stress; when we are relaxed, we tend to breathe slower and more deeply. Since these patterns are closely tied with our nervous systems and our experiences of stress, controlling your breathing can have a direct impact on your body and mind, your health and emotions. Try some of the breathing techniques below and see how they affect how you feel.

3-4-5 BREATHING

1. Inhale deeply through your nose for 3 seconds.
2. Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
3. Exhale through your mouth for 5 seconds.

Repeat!

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

1. Sit comfortably.
2. Using your right thumb, softly close your right nostril and inhale slowly through your left nostril, then close it with your ring finger.
3. With your right nostril open, inhale slowly and then close it with your thumb.

Repeat steps 2 and 3.