

BREATHING EXERCISES

Just Breathe:

A Simple Exercise and 10 Songs Reminding You to Breathe

If you're like me, then breathing exercises are easier said than done. I've been told time and again that I should be doing controlled breathing to help with my anxiety and quiet my active mind. *Just try sitting for five minutes and breathing in and out, Danielle, it's easy.* Easy? I couldn't even get through five seconds without the mental gymnastics starting up. After years of trying for a few seconds at a time and giving up, I finally discovered something that works for me -- listening to music about breathing. By listening to music, my mind focuses on one thing, something relaxing, and I can breathe without the silence doing me in. It's still not easy, but it helps.

Here are the simple steps I follow:

1. Sit or lay comfortably, and close your eyes, or focus them on a relaxing photo.
 2. Rest your hands gently on your abdomen, legs, or in a prayer position, and straighten your posture.
 3. Breathe in through your nose for three counts of the song, or whatever feels right with the rhythm of the music.
 4. Breathe out through your mouth for five counts of the song.
 5. Relax your body as you breathe out, and imagine the music flowing with your breath down through your body into the ground.
- Not too bad, right? If you can do longer than three beats in and five out, all the better, but try to keep breathing out longer than you breathe in, to ground you.

This exercise is something you can do any time you need to decompress, even if you only have a few minutes. You can do this in your car, at a park, or even at your desk during lunch.

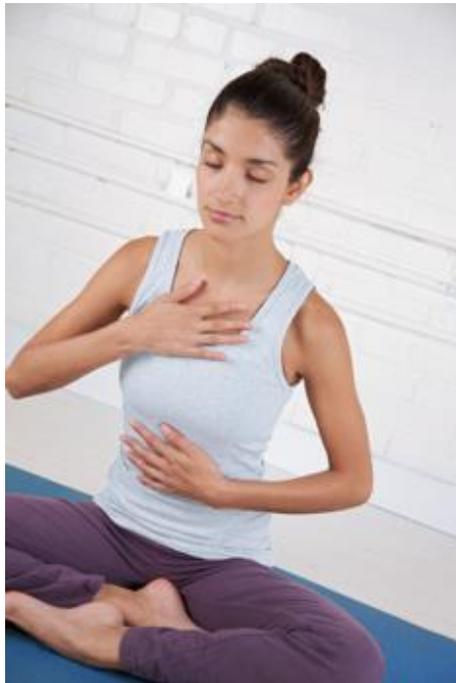
Below is a playlist with a variety of songs about breathing. "Keep Breathing" by Ingrid Michaelson is my number one go-to. You can also use classical or new age music if you prefer no words, or even the musical sounds of nature. The rhythmic flowing of a babbling brook can be very calming.

Now relax your body, listen, and **just breathe...**

1. Keep Breathing - Ingrid Michelson
2. Breathe In Breathe Out - Mat Kearny
3. Breathe - Alexi Murdoch
4. Air That I Breathe - K.D. Lang
5. Breathe - Télépopmusik
6. Breathe In - Frou Frou
7. Breathing - Kate Bush
8. Take My Breath Away - Berlin
9. Breathe - Taylor Swift feat. Colbie Caillat
10. Breathe (2 AM) - Anna Nalick



Alternate Nostril Breathing



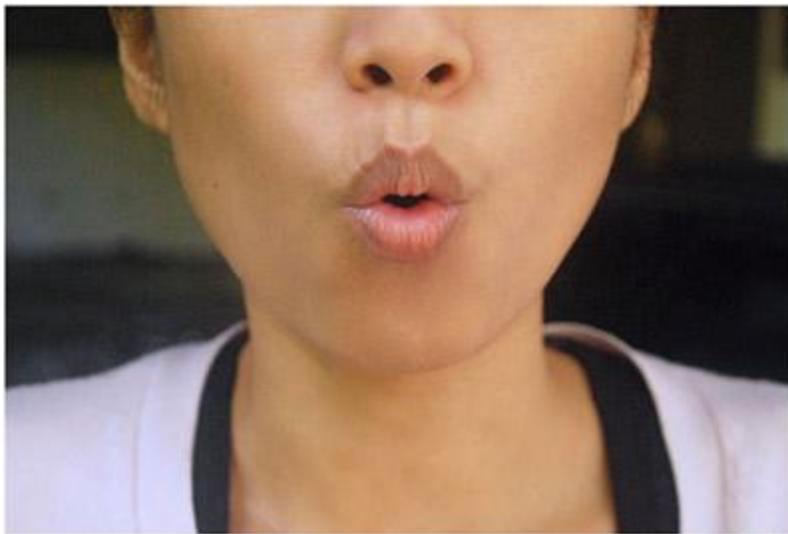
Diaphragm Breathing



Hookups



The Cooling Breath



Kaki or Beak Breath

Breathe in through your nose and slowly exhale through pursed lips (like a beak).

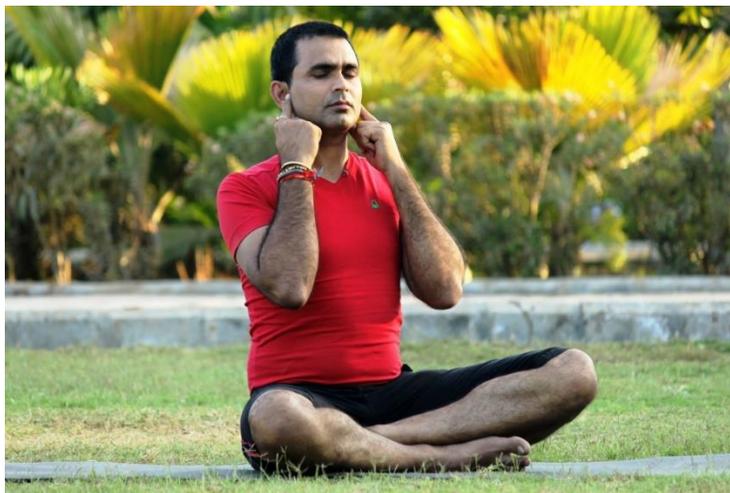
Balance Buttons

Massage the spot where the skull is attached to the neck and, at the same time, the navel. While massaging, practice slow, deep breathing through the nose



Brain Buttons

Place one hand on over the navel. With the other hand, massage the areas of either side of the sternum below the collar bone for 30 seconds. Change hands.



Humming Breath

Breathe in
through your
nose



Breathe out as you
"hissssssssssss. . ."



THE 1 MINUTE BREATH Pranayama

(EVEN BREATHING WITH A HOLD)

Even breathing steadies the heart rate, and adding a hold makes for a good pranayama exercise during a yoga practice as well as a fast-acting technique for calming the mind when facing a stressor.

1. Inhale to a count of 5.
2. Hold your full breath for a count of 5.
3. Exhale to a count of 5.
4. Repeat this breath in succession, gradually increasing the number of seconds... can you work to 8 seconds? 10? 12? 15?

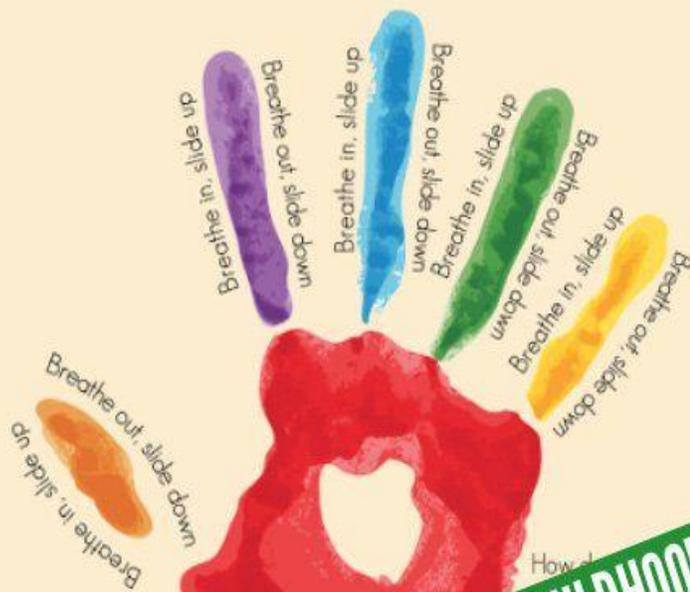
In Kundalini yoga, you work towards the One Minute Breath with this, a practice where you inhale, hold, and exhale for 20 seconds each, so that one breath takes 60 seconds.

Experience deep breathing with this... feel the air fill your upper chest, mid-chest, and belly, and feel it completely leave

Don't strain, but use this as an opportunity for acceptance and mindfulness. You can take regular breaths in between when you need to.

CALM DOWN WITH TAKE 5 BREATHING

1. Stretch your hand out like a star.
2. Get your pointer finger ready to trace your fingers up and down.
3. Slide up each finger slowly ~ slide down the other side.
4. Breathe in through your nose ~ out through your mouth.
5. Put it together and breathe in as you slide up and breathe out as you slide down.
Keep going until you have finished tracing your hand.



How do you feel now? Do you need another 5 breaths?

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3-Minute Breathing Space

1. Become Aware (30 seconds)
Ask yourself, “What is my experience right now...in thoughts...in feelings...bodily sensations?” Step out of auto-pilot and observe. Acknowledge and register your experience – even if it is unwanted – without trying to change, fix, judge, or answer anything.
2. Bring attention to breathing (30 seconds – 1 minute)
Bring your attention to the movement and sensation of the breathing, noticing your in and out breaths as they occur. Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you to the present.
3. Expand your Awareness (1 minute – 1.5 minutes)
Expand your awareness to include a sense of the body as a whole – your posture, facial expressions, thoughts, feelings, sensations. Also, the situation and environment you’re in. Allow yourself to breathe with any strong thoughts and sensations; you might even say to yourself, “What it is, it is OK, just let me feel it.” If mind wanders to any bothersome thoughts, just acknowledge then let go of these – focusing back on your breath.

Breathing Exercises Online:

“6 Breathing Exercises to Relax in 10 Minutes or Less” – outlines how to do Equal Breathing, Abdominal Breathing, Progressive Relaxation, Alternate Nostril Breathing, Guided Visualization and Skull Shining Breath.

<http://greatist.com/happiness/breathing-exercises-relax>

Dr. Weil: Breathing: Three Exercises – The Stimulating Breath (Bellows Breath), The 4-7-8 (or Relaxing Breath) Exercise and Breath Counting

<http://www.drweil.com/health-wellness/body-mind-spirit/stress-anxiety/breathing-three-exercises/>

AnxietyBC: Calm Breathing

<https://www.anxietybc.com/sites/default/files/CalmBreathing.pdf>