

# Three Breathing Techniques to Relieve Stress and Anxiety.

BREATHE EASY

HARNESS THE POWER OF YOUR BREATH  
FOR INSTANT CALM



INSIDE STORY THERAPY

## Introduction:

Welcome to "Breathe Easy," your go-to guide for mastering the art of breathwork to conquer stress and anxiety. In this worksheet, we'll explore three simple yet powerful breathing techniques that you can use anytime, anywhere, to bring a sense of tranquility and balance into your life. Say goodbye to racing thoughts and tight chests, and hello to a newfound sense of peace and clarity!

Breathing techniques are powerful tools for managing stress and anxiety. These practices have been cultivated over centuries, originating from different cultures and traditions. Let's explore three commonly used techniques and their origins:

### 1. Diaphragmatic Breathing (Abdominal Breathing)

**Origin:** Diaphragmatic breathing is a technique derived from various ancient practices such as yoga and meditation. It has been a cornerstone of many Eastern traditions, including Pranayama in yoga, where breath control is central to achieving physical, mental, and spiritual balance.

#### Technique:

- Find a comfortable sitting or lying position.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen.
- To inhale, slowly breathe in through the nose, drawing the breath down toward the stomach. The stomach should push upward against the hand, while the chest remains still.
- To exhale, tighten the abdominal muscles and let the stomach fall downward while exhaling through pursed lips. Again, the chest should remain still.

Focus on the sensation of your breath and the rise and fall of your abdomen.

Repeat for several breath cycles, gradually extending your inhales and exhales. You can also practice this sitting in a chair, with your knees bent and your shoulders, head, and neck relaxed. Practice for five to 10 minutes, several times a day if possible.



## 2. Box Breathing (Square Breathing)

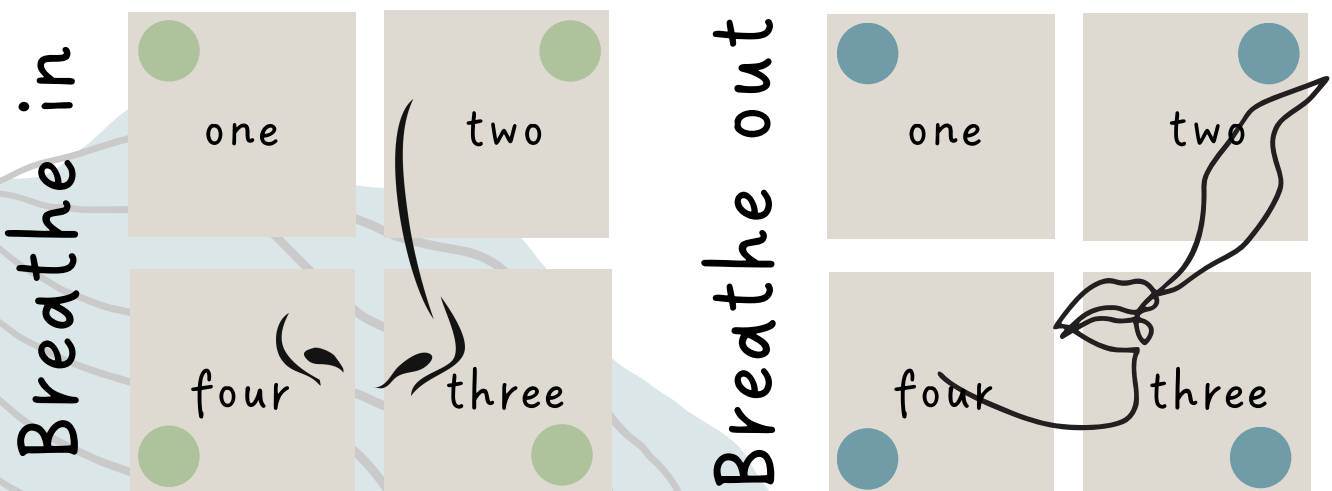
**Origin:** Box breathing, also known as square breathing, has roots in ancient yogic practices. It is used in disciplines like meditation and mindfulness to induce calmness and focus. It works by distracting your mind as you count to four, calming your nervous system, and decreasing stress in your body. The technique's simplicity and effectiveness have made it popular in modern stress-reduction methods. Repeat this exercise as many times as you can. Thirty seconds of deep breathing will help you feel more relaxed and in control.

### Technique:

- Sit in a chair, stand, or lie down on your back with one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. When you sit on a chair, ensure that your back is supported, and your feet are firmly on the floor.
- Breathe as you would normally for a minute.
- Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of four.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of four.
- Pause without breathing for a count of four.
- Repeat this cycle for several rounds, gradually increasing the count if comfortable.

Observe the rise and fall of your chest and stomach. If you notice that your chest is rising but your stomach is not, you are shallow breathing. If your stomach is rising, you are deep breathing, activating full relaxation in your body. Be aware of your breath to ensure that you are taking deep breaths, allowing your stomach to rise. If you are lying down or seated on a chair, you will feel your back pressed against the surface when you take a deep breath. If this is your first time practicing box breathing, push your stomach out while focusing on smooth, deep breaths.

Practice this regularly to encourage deep breathing on a daily basis.



### 3. 4-7-8 Breathing (Relaxing Breath)

**Origin:** The 4-7-8 breathing technique draws inspiration from pranayama practices in yoga, particularly the technique known as "Sheetali" or "cooling breath." The technique has been popularised by Dr. Andrew Weil as a simple method to induce relaxation and manage stress.

#### **Technique:**

- Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose for a count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- Exhale slowly and completely through your mouth for a count of eight.
- This completes one cycle. Inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breath cycles.



**Remember:** The origins of these techniques are steeped in traditions focused on holistic well-being. Practicing these techniques consistently can help you regain a sense of calm and control in moments of stress and anxiety. Choose the technique that resonates with you the most and incorporate it into your daily routine for maximum benefits.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

As you wrap up your journey through these breathing techniques, remember that your breath is always with you, ready to serve as a source of comfort and calm. By incorporating these practices into your daily routine, you're not only nurturing your mental and emotional well-being but also cultivating a deeper connection to yourself and the world around you. So take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and embrace the transformative power of your breath.



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