

Breathing tools for calm, balance and clarity

A quick-reference guide for using your breath to reduce activation (panic, overwhelm, stress, anxiety, anger etc), create space, and come back to a place of calm and control.

BREATHING TOOL	HOW TO DO IT	WHAT IT SUPPORTS	BEST TO USE WHEN
Triangle Breath	Inhale for a count of 4 . Exhale for a count of 4 . Hold on empty (after the exhale) for a count of 4 . Repeat for 2-3 minutes . Change the count to suit your comfort. It is more about the breathing pattern than the count.	A simple, steady pattern that slows the pace and gives the mind one thing to follow.	You feel scattered, tense or caught in racing thoughts; before a meeting, during a difficult conversation, or when needing to make a decision.
4-6-8 Breathing	Inhale through the nose for a count of 4 . Hold for 6 . Exhale through pursed lips for a count of 8 . Repeat 3-5 rounds . The aim is to slow down the exhale.	An extended-exhale practice for settling the body back into regulation.	You are highly wound up, irritable, overstimulated, or struggling to fall asleep.
Physiological Sigh	Take a full inhale through the nose. At the top, take a second short "top-up" inhale. Release one long exhale, or sigh, through the mouth. Repeat 1-3 times .	A fast reset that emphasises a long and effortful release of breath.	You need immediate space after bad news, conflict, pressure, frustration, or a spike of stress. Use it before you respond.
Coherent Breathing	Breathe in through the nose for a count of 5 , then exhale through the nose or mouth for a count of 5 : smooth, even and unforced. Continue for 5 minutes . If helpful, use a timer or gentle visual cue. Change the count to suit your comfort, for example 4:4 or 6:4.	A steady, rhythmic practice for building baseline calm, attention and emotional steadiness.	A daily practice, before focused work, after exercise, or when you want to regulate without needing a rapid reset.
Box Breathing	Breathe in for a count of 4 , hold for 4 , exhale for a count of 4 , hold for 4 . Repeat the cycle for about 4-6 rounds .	Calms the nervous system and gently activates the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest mode).	You feel stressed, anxious, and notice your heart racing.

A simple rule of thumb. If you feel activated, make the exhale longer than the inhale. If any breath hold, pace or technique makes you light-headed, anxious or more activated, return to natural breathing or choose a gentler version.

In all breathing techniques, inhale through the nose. Exhale through the nose or mouth, but the more activated you feel, the more you are likely to benefit from exhaling through the mouth, until you feel yourself starting to settle.

Please note. This is a general wellbeing tool, not a substitute for professional mental health care. If breathing practices feel uncomfortable, stop and return to normal breathing. Check with your doctor first if you are pregnant, or have a heart or breathing condition, or epilepsy. If things feel heavy or unsafe, reach out to your GP, preferred support system, or Lifeline on 13 11 14.