

Restore Activity Series

Deep Breathing



Getting Started With Deep Breathing Exercises

It Starts With One Step

Deep breathing exercises can be very helpful in reducing stress and helping you to decompress. Getting started can feel silly if you've never tried it before or don't have a simple plan going into it. Here are the first steps to get started.

- Go to a quiet space (closet, car, bathroom, etc.)
- Sit down and try and get comfortable
- Close your eyes
- Breathe in through your nose to the count of four (try and fill your lungs as best as you can)
- Hold your breath to the count of seven
- Exhale out of your mouth to the count of eight
- Repeat this process as many times as needed until you feel calm

You can also use this technique to help you relax and fall asleep quickly.

This technique is called the 4-7-8 breathing exercise but, there are a number of different exercises that you can try. If you enjoy this one, check out others online and give them a try.

Keeping Track

Use the space below to record the techniques you have tried and those you would like to try.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, arranged in two columns of ten lines each.

The Research

Below are some key pieces of research and articles around the benefits of deep breathing exercises.

Bullock, B Grace. "What Focusing on the Breath Does to Your Brain." Greater Good Magazine, 31 Oct. 2019, greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_focusing_on_the_breath_does_to_your_brain.

Goldman, Bruce. "Study shows how slow breathing induces tranquility." Stanford Medicine News Center, 30 Mar. 2017, med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2017/03/study-discovers-how-slow-breathing-induces-tranquility.html.

Ma, Xiao et al. "The Effect of Diaphragmatic Breathing on Attention, Negative Affect and Stress in Healthy Adults." Frontiers in psychology vol. 8 874. 6 Jun. 2017, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00874. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5455070/>.

"Relaxation techniques: Breath control helps quell errant stress response." Harvard Health Publishing: Harvard Medical School, 6 July 2020, www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/relaxation-techniques-breath-control-helps-quell-errant-stress-response.

Seppala, Emma, et al. "Research: Why Breathing Is So Effective at Reducing Stress." Harvard Business Review, 29 Sept. 2020, hbr.org/2020/09/research-why-breathing-is-so-effective-at-reducing-stress.

Zaccaro, Andrea et al. "How Breath-Control Can Change Your Life: A Systematic Review on Psycho-Physiological Correlates of Slow Breathing." Frontiers in human neuroscience vol. 12 353. 7 Sep. 2018, doi:10.3389/fnhum.2018.00353. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6137615/>.