



## **Breathing Techniques**

Breathing is something we all do. Most of the time we are not even aware of it.

Practicing mindful breathing can calm, energize, and center you. Since breathing is something you can control when you choose to do so, it is a powerful tool to use for success. Focusing on your breathing is one of the most effective ways to come back to the present moment.

Begin by observing your breathing.

Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your abdomen.

As you breathe in and out, watch which hand is moving. This will show you if you are breathing from your chest or from your abdomen.

**Abdominal breathing** is the best way to relax and center yourself. Make this breathing a regular part of your day. Try two practice sessions a day to obtain great results. This can be part of your meditation practice.

1. Inhale slowly through the nose, expanding the abdomen, expanding the chest, and raising the shoulders.
2. Hold for a few comfortable seconds.
3. Exhale deeply through the nose. In the reverse pattern, slowly dropping the shoulders, relaxing the chest, and contracting the abdomen.
4. Repeat.

Once you have mastered abdominal breathing you are ready to experiment with different breathing methods for different results.

### **To relax:**

Take a deep breath through your nose all the way down your belly. Then exhale through your mouth with a big "sigh". Next, take a deep breath in through your nose and blow it out from your mouth. Repeat it several times.



## **Breathing (“4-7-8”) technique to balance emotions and relax:**

Rest the tip of your tongue against the roof of your mouth, right behind your top front teeth. You’ll need to keep your tongue in place throughout the practice. It takes practice to keep from moving your tongue when you exhale. Exhaling during 4-7-8 breathing can be easier for some people when they purse their lips.

The following steps should all be carried out in the cycle of one breath:

First, let your lips part. Make a whooshing sound, exhaling completely through your mouth.

Next, close your lips, inhaling silently through your nose as you count to four in your head.

Then, for seven seconds, hold your breath.

Make another whooshing exhale from your mouth for eight seconds.

When you inhale again, you initiate a new cycle of breath. Practice this pattern for four full breaths.

To energize:

Inhale through your nose deeply and slowly. Then exhale and inhale rapidly through your nose, keeping your mouth closed. Do not do more than 15 seconds on your first try in order to avoid hyperventilating; you may be able to gradually increase this as you sense your comfort zone.

This kind of breathing is a great way to energize yourself when you feel you are in need of caffeine, which only gives a temporary boost.