

Calming Techniques

Basic Belly Breathing Technique

The basic technique is to breathe slowly and steadily IN THROUGH YOUR NOSE all the way down to your BELLY filling it with air like you would a balloon. Then to breathe slowly and steadily OUT THROUGH YOUR MOUTH like you're gently trying to steam up a window. The HOLDING OF THE BREATH at either end can really help to calm your nervous system.

Relaxed Breathing Pattern

= 4 / 2 / 4 / 2

= IN / HOLD / OUT / HOLD

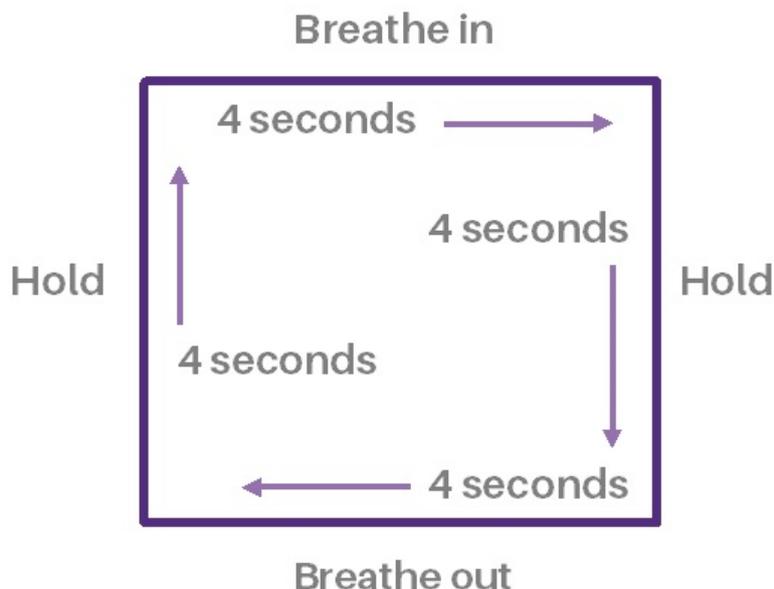
This is the basic breathing technique:

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes if you can and notice how you feel
2. BREATHE slowly and steadily IN through your NOSE down to your BELLY for a count of 4
3. HOLD your breath for a count of 2
4. BREATHE slowly and steadily OUT through your MOUTH slowly for a count of 4
5. HOLD at the bottom of the breath for 2
6. REPEAT the cycle for a few minutes S L O W I N G the counting down as you go
7. Notice how you feel. If necessary repeat.

Square Breathing

= 4 / 4 / 4 / 4

When you become more comfortable with holding your breath (it can take a bit of practice) square breathing is a very steady breathing pattern use the image below to give your mind something to focus on.



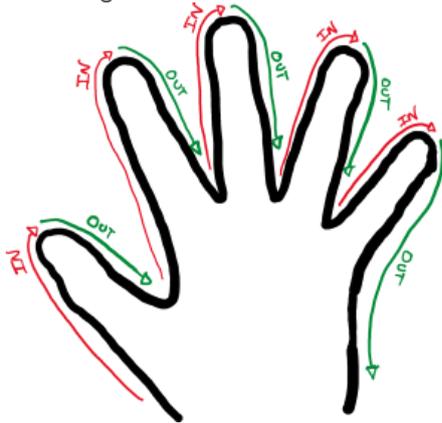
Calming Breathing

= 4 / 2 / 6 / 2

When feeling very overwhelmed it can be extremely helpful to breathe OUT for a longer count than you breathe IN. With practice you can work to extend this technique with a helpful pattern being 7 / 2 / 11 / 2 if you really feel like going for it!

Hand Breathing

A physical action can be helpfully distracting so you can link any of the techniques above to hand breathing.



Tracing the index finger of one hand up and down the fingers of the other hand in time with the breathing count and holding the breath at the tip and dip of each finger.

Bringing Us Back To Our Senses

Another way to promote calm is to tune into any one of your five senses alongside your breathing. For example, feel your feet grounded on the floor, run your hands under warm water, give yourself a hand massage or listen to music that calms you.

You can build on this with a breathing technique you can use wherever you are.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Technique

You silently named to yourself:

5 things you can see SIGHT

4 things in the room and imagine how they feel TOUCH

3 sounds you can hear in or outside of the room SOUND

2 smells (or imagine 2 smells that make you feel calm/happy) SMELL

1 thing you can taste in your mouth (or imagine you would like to taste!) TASTE

Tell Others How You're Feeling

Have a think about which techniques might work best for you and practice them **when you're feeling calm**. Maybe first thing in the morning, or whilst you're in the shower, or just before bed. This means they will be anchored to a relaxed state making them more effective when you need to use them when faced with anxiety.