

# Relieving stress in the moment



Are you stressed? We all are at some point in the day. Work life, home life and trying to fit it all into life can leave you gasping for breath.

How are you breathing right now? Are your breaths slow and deep, or short and shallow? It's not surprising to hear that deep breathing is a proven tactic to relieve stress. Taking breaks to practice deep breathing may be tough. However, it's worth it to slow down. Try it for a moment, tap into your breath and give yourself a tool that allows you to find your focus—whenever, wherever.



## Give it a try

First, let's experiment. No matter where you are, take this moment to focus on your breath. If you can, sit down and close your eyes.

1. Fill your lungs with air. Slowly count to 4 as you breathe in.
2. Hold your breath for another 4 counts.
3. Then release the air over another 4 counts, exhaling just as slowly as you inhaled.
4. Try this for several rounds of breath.



## Check in afterward

When you've finished, check in with yourself. Ask yourself:

- How am I breathing now?
- How do I feel?
- Do I notice any different sensations in my body or my mind?



## Change it up

If you have trouble slowing down your breathing at first, try some of these old tricks:

- Gently close one nostril with a finger while you breathe. This will halve your air supply in and out, forcing you to inhale and exhale more slowly.
- Try lying flat on your back. This position we normally reserve for sleep can naturally signal your brain to slow down your respiration.
- Just like a sleeping baby's belly rises and falls with each breath, try breathing deep into your belly. This activates your vagus nerve, telling your body that everything is going to be OK.

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