

Breathing Through Stress

Use this activity to learn new ways to regulate anxiety and calm your mind.

Using our breath to regulate stress is a great tool that we can use anytime because all we need is ourselves! After practicing this activity in a group setting, download the activity, and share it with group members to continue practicing at home.

Instructional Video:

Make sure to check out the instructional video created by Tom Speare from 10th Gate Yoga to help advisors and students feel comfortable with the following breathing techniques. <https://youtu.be/6OebKcF8Cy4>

Deep Breathing

Instructions:

- Make a mental note of where your stress/anxiety level falls on a scale of 1-10.
- Close your eyes and inhale deeply through your nose. While inhaling, notice where in your body, you feel the most stress. Picture all of this stress moving into your center and picture the stress combining with your breath. Hold it for a second.
- Exhale through your mouth. Imagine yourself releasing out stress, tension, or frustration combined with your breath.
- Repeat this exercise three times, then rate your anxiety/stress again on a scale of 1-10. Continue to practice this exercise until you feel more relaxed.



REAL LIFE
EXAMPLE

Javier (he, him, his) has been feeling bad about himself lately. Another kid has been picking on him at school, saying that he smells. Javier has friends who stick up for him, but it has been causing him stress. When he's getting ready for school in the morning, he has been feeling shaky and nauseous. His mom suggested he try breathing exercises before going to bed and in the morning before he gets out of bed. The first morning he decided to try alternate nostril breathing. After the first two deep breaths, he felt the oxygen and blood flowing to his brain. His lungs began to open, and he felt the shakiness start to subside. After doing 15 rounds of the breathing exercises and sitting quietly for one minute, he felt better and was able to eat breakfast.
#herrenproject #breathingthroughstress

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Alternate Nostril Breathing

Instructions:

Get in a comfortable position. Put down whatever you are holding and relax. Feel your sitz bones on the ground and elongate your spine. Feel your head floating up. Remember, throughout this exercise, to breathe slowly and deeply. The picture below illustrates the placement of your fingers.

- Place your left hand on your left knee and bring your right thumb to your right nostril.
- Place your index and middle finger on your third eye (between your eyebrows).
- Close your right nostril with your right thumb and inhale deeply through your left nostril.
- Then take your right ring finger and close your left nostril, so both nostrils are closed. Take a second to pause.
- Next, let go of your thumb on the right nostril and exhale deeply and slowly through the right nostril you just opened.
- Pause.
- With your right nostril now open, repeat this pattern. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your right nostril with your left nostril closed by your ring finger.
- Close your right nostril you just breathed through with your thumb, so both nostrils are closed and pause.
- Take off your ring finger to open your left nostril and exhale slowly and deeply through that left nostril.
- Pause.
- The pattern should be: with the right nostril closed, breathe in deeply through the left nostril, gently close both nostrils, let go of the right nostril and exhale deeply through the right nostril. Pause. Breathe in deeply through the right nostril, close both nostrils, pause, then breathe out deeply through the left nostril. Repeat this pattern slowly ten times.



Resources and References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28316704>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3276936/>