

Simple breathing exercises to relax in just a few minutes

Lifestyle



You don't need to invest in a 60-minute back massage to gain back energy and willpower for another day at work or another stressful meeting. Just take a few minutes to learn these simple breathing techniques. If you'd like to dive deeper, look into our lessons on [pranayama](#) and [why shallow breathing is dangerous](#).

Breath counting

Start by relaxing, sitting comfortably, and having your spine straight. The point of this exercise is to keep the exhale longer than inhale. This makes your vagus nerve send message to your brain to shut down the sympathetic nervous system and switch to the parasympathetic nervous system, which makes us relaxed. So, if you count to 4 when you

inhale, make your exhale 6 seconds long.

Diaphragmatic breathing

Also known as abdominal breathing, this technique is highly beneficial. Lie on your back with your knees slightly bent. Put your right hand on your chest and left hand below your rib cage. Inhale slowly through your nose, feel the stomach rise and move towards legs. When you slowly exhale, you should feel stomach muscles tightening up and moving back to the original place.

Nadi Shodhana or alternate nostril breathing

Sit down and relax. Take some deep breaths until you feel your body relax. Close your eyes and prepare your right hand. Place your right thumb over your right nostril and breathe in through your left nostril. Before breathing out, close the left nostril with your right finger and release the thumb. Breathe out through your right nostril, close it up and exhale again on the left side. Repeat for a few minutes.

Kapalbhati

In Sanskrit, Kapalbhati means forehead shining breathing technique. Sit down, cross your legs, and relax. For this pranayama technique, you need to inhale well and deeply, but exhale rapidly. Take a long deep breath, place your hand over your stomach and exhale multiple times while rapidly contracting your abdomen muscles. Inhalation after the burst of forced exhalation should be automatic. Beginners should not be doing more than ten rapid exhales at once.

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