

Mindful Breathing

TECHNIQUE

Mindfulness Techniques for Anxiety and Worry

Mindful breathing technique

Practicing mindfulness exercises begins with the breath. Anxiety and panic caused by unwanted or unpleasant thoughts can cause short, laboured breaths. Anxious breathing occurs in the chest, while deeper breathing occurs in the belly. Practicing mindful breathing and grounding techniques can slow your breath, return your heart rate to a more steady pace, and, in turn, reduce feelings of anxiety resulting from unpleasant thoughts.

When you are feeling panicked or anxious, practice this mindful breathing technique to help ground you in the present moment.

Before you begin, find a quiet place where you are free from distractions and you can just focus on your breathing. Take a seat or stand up straight, with your head over your heart, and your heart over your pelvis. You may opt to close your eyes before you begin if you need deeper relaxation.

- Inhale through the nose for four seconds. Take a slow, even inhale rather than a big gulp of air. Do not rush.
- Pause at the top of your breath and hold for one second.
- Exhale slowly through the nose for four seconds. Rather than releasing your breath all at once, exhale with intention for all four seconds.
- Pause at the end of your exhale for one second before repeating.
- Inhale again through the nose and repeat the steps above.
- Continue breathing this way until you can notice a change in the way your body and mind feels.