

## SIMPLE BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Paying attention to your breathing is one of the most fundamental ways to relieve anxiety and tension. Here are a couple of simple ways to improve your breathing within the next few minutes.



### ☞ Diaphragmatic Breathing

Put one hand on your stomach and the other one on your chest, and see which one rises when you breathe in...

If it is your chest that is rising, it means you are breathing too shallowly (most of us do). This type of breathing may contribute to increase in anxiety and tension.

“Deep breathing” we often hear about, contrary to popular belief, doesn’t actually mean taking in vast quantities of air. It refers to breathing deeply into your diaphragm, a dome-shaped muscle which expands making your stomach rise when you breathe into it.

Imagine that you have a bowl in your stomach that you are trying to fill in with air – see that stream of clean fresh air going down all the way into your stomach to fill the “bowl”.

Practise breathing deeper until you can get your stomach to rise consistently on in-breath.

### ☞ 7/11 Breathing

This is a Martial Arts approach, where the out-breath is made longer than the in-breath, i.e. breathing in to the count of 7 and breathing out to the count of 11.

This can be challenging to achieve straight away, so start with smaller counts: say, breathe in to the count of 4 and breathe out to the count of 6, increasing the count as you get more practice. Repeat a number of times.

### ☞ Square Breathing



To do the so-called “square breathing”:

- 1) Breathe in as you count to 4
- 2) Hold your breath to the count of 4
- 3) Breathe out to the count of 4
- 4) Count to 4 before breathing in again.

It can be helpful to rest your eyes on each side of a square for the steps 1 - 4 as you perform this exercise . Repeat a number of times.

**NOTE:** If you suffer from asthma or other breathing difficulties, please consult with your doctor before undertaking any breathing exercises.