

The calming breath

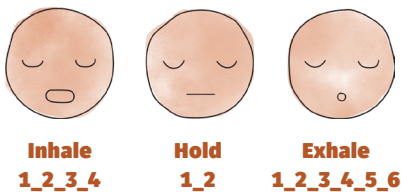


Did you know breathing plays an essential role in stress and anxiety?

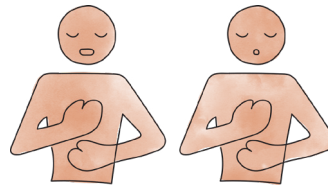
Stress and anxiety can increase your breathing rate. And a faster breathing rate can unbalance your levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide. This can then lead to a number of other physical sensations, such as dizziness, tingling, and muscle tightness.

Actively focusing on slowing down your breathing rate, and learning new breathing habits, can help you to tackle your symptoms of anxiety.

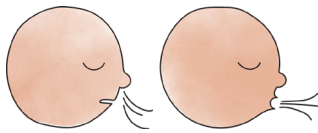
Tips



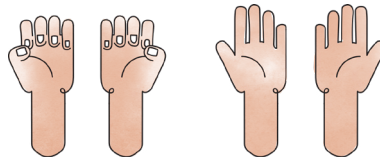
Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 2 seconds and then breathe out for 6 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times. If this feels too slow when you first start practising, you may want to try 3-in, 1-hold, 4-out.



Place one hand on your chest and one on your stomach. Try to breathe deeply so the hand on your stomach rises – this will indicate that you are breathing all the way into your diaphragm.



The key to learning effective controlled breathing is practise! We recommend practising for 2-3 minutes, 3 times per day, when feeling relaxed. By continuing to practise this technique, it will start to become a habit. This then makes it easier to implement at times when you are feeling stressed or anxious.



Sit with your hands clenched in your lap, with palms upwards. Close your eyes or fix them on a point. Breathe in slowly and, as you breathe out, uncurl your thumb on one hand. Repeat and uncurl the next finger. Keep repeating until you have uncurled all your fingers for both hands and are sitting with relaxed open hands in your lap.

If you would like more information about breathing, or other strategies, contact us at Student Wellbeing.

Apps

Search on the App Store or Google Play

Breathe (Apple only)

Breathe is an app for managing stress and anxiety via controlled breathing.

au.professionals.reachout.com/reachout-breathe

Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is a mindfulness app with a number of different audio scripts to help you develop your mindfulness skills.

www.smilingmind.com.au

Online Resources

Centre for Clinical Interventions

Free audio files for breathing and mindfulness.

www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Other-Resources



Access support and more information

www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling or call (02) 4921 6622