

## Soothing Rhythm Breathing

Soothing rhythm breathing is a simple technique that activates your body's relaxation response. Scientific studies show that slowed breathing engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which aids in rest, digestion, and stress reduction. This can lower heart rate and promote a sense of calm. Using this exercise during stressful times can quickly calm your mind, and regular practice can enhance your overall well-being and make you more adept at using it when needed.

### Tips:

- Once you are familiar with the technique, try closing your eyes while practicing.
- If there are any parts that don't work for you then feel free to not do them.
- If you don't want to count the breath, simply focus on slowing your breath down - especially the exhale.
- Focus on breathing slowly, not deeply; deep breathing can cause dizziness.
- Even a few calming breaths can make a difference, but ideally aim to practice for at least a couple of minutes at a time.

### Step By Step Guide

#### Step 1: Basic Breathing

1. Inhale slowly through your nose for a count of four, letting your belly rise rather than your chest. This is known as diaphragmatic breathing, and it helps you take fuller breaths.
2. Hold your breath for a count of two.
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of six. Let your shoulders drop and your jaw relax. Let your tongue drop from the roof of your mouth.
4. Repeat this breathing pattern three times.

#### Step 2: Adding a Calming Colour

1. Identify a colour you find relaxing, or soothing in some way. As you inhale, imagine being surrounded by and breathing in this calming colour. Inhale for a count of four, letting your belly rise.
2. Hold your breath for a count of two.
3. Exhale, letting go of any tension, for a count of six.
4. Repeat this for three more breaths.

#### Step 3: Adding Calming Words

1. As you breathe, think of words you might find calming, for example "breathe in calmness" and "relax and release", or "letting go" and "slowing down".
2. With each inhale, think "breathe in calm" (or similar) for a count of 4, letting your belly rise.
3. Hold for a count of 2.
4. With each exhale, think "relax and release" (or similar) for a count of 6.
5. Repeat this for three more breaths.

Continue to breathe in this way for as long as desired. When you're ready to finish, slowly bring your awareness back to the present. Wiggle your fingers and toes, stretch a bit, and then open your eyes. See if you can intentionally take this sense of calm with you as you continue with your day.



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