



Breathing exercises

These are suggestions for six breathing exercises that help to let go of thoughts and create space for creativity and imagination. Select one that you deem most fitting for the situation and ideally, make it your own. In the session, you can follow the script by reading it out loud.

General instructions

Take a comfortable seat, sitting upright with both feet on the floor and your hands resting on your thighs. Then, if you feel comfortable to do so, close your eyes. Otherwise, focus your eyes on your hands.

Become aware of your body, and notice how you breathe. Unlike the mind, the body can only exist in this time and in this place alone. To be in the moment, we concentrate on our body and the breath. If your mind wanders off, try to gently guide it back to your body and your breath. This is normal. Breathing always helps: Extending your exhale calms down the nervous system. What follows is an exercise to let go of accumulated thoughts and concerns and connect with our bodies and breath.



1. Body Scan

The Body Scan helps to be in the present moment and release from overthinking, by mentioning specific body parts to shift the awareness to.

Script:

Let's begin with some gentle breathing:

- *Inhale deeply through your nostrils for a count of four. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of six. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

Repeat this breathing pattern for a few cycles, allowing your mind to settle and your body to relax.

- *Where do you feel your body touching something? Do you feel your feet touching the floor? Bring your attention to your feet. Notice any sensations or tension. Breathe in deeply again, and as you exhale, imagine any tension melting away, leaving your feet relaxed and comfortable.*
- *Move your awareness up your legs and to your hips. Notice any sensations. Inhale deeply, and as you exhale, let your hips and legs become heavy and relaxed.*
- *Shift your focus to your lower and upper back. Notice any tension or discomfort. As you breathe out, visualise releasing any tightness, allowing your back to relax.*
- *Bring your attention to your belly and chest. Feel the rise and fall of your breath. Inhale deeply, and as you exhale, imagine your chest and abdomen becoming calm and at ease.*
- *Move your awareness down your arms, to your hands, all the way down to your fingertips. Notice any sensations or tension. Breathe in deeply. As you exhale, let your arms and hands become heavy and relaxed.*
- *Shift your focus to your neck and shoulders. Inhale deeply. As you exhale, feel your shoulders dropping and relaxing, letting go of any tightness.*
- *Finally, bring your attention to your head. Notice any sensations or tension. As you exhale, imagine releasing any tension from your forehead, eyes and jaw.*

Take a few moments to breathe deeply, feeling the sense of relaxation and calmness throughout your entire body. Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.



2. Box Breathing

Box Breathing, or Square Breathing boosts concentration and creates a sense of calmness. It's effective for opening up mental space for creativity by following a structured breathing pattern. By focusing on the timing of the breath, this technique brings attention to the present moment, allowing the mind to clear and open up to creativity.

Script:

Close your eyes gently and take a moment to settle in. Let your body relax and your mind become present.

With your eyes closed, imagine in front of you a square with four equal sides. This will help us breathe and hold our breath for the count of four seconds, breathing and holding our breath, while we trace one corner of the box to the next in our minds, all the way around the box.

Taking strong, deep breaths, we are going to inhale through our nostrils for four seconds, then hold the breath for four, exhale through the nostrils for four seconds, and hold the breath for four seconds again. We repeat this a couple of times.

- *Inhale 1, 2, 3, 4*
- *Hold 1, 2, 3, 4*
- *Exhale 1, 2, 3, 4*
- *Hold 1, 2, 3, 4*

Repeat about 10 times, guiding the movement around the box. At some point, you may instruct to continue without your guidance.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.



3. 4-7-8 Breathing Technique

The 4-7-8 Breathing Technique reduces stress and calms the mind. By focusing on the length of the breath, this technique brings the attention to the present moment, allowing the mind to clear and open up to creativity.

Script:

Close your eyes gently and take a moment to settle in. Let your body relax and your mind become present.

- *Slowly inhale through your nostrils for a count of four. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Hold: Hold your breath gently for a count of seven. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.*
- *Exhale slowly and fully through your mouth for a count of eight. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.*

Repeat this cycle for about eight rounds.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.



4. Ocean Breath

Ocean Breath, or Ujjayi Pranayama, involves creating a gentle ocean-like sound in the throat, and boosts relaxation and concentration. This exercise soothes the mind and fosters a meditative state, ideal for creative exploration.

Script:

Sit comfortably with your spine straight and eyes closed. Take a moment to settle in and relax your body.

Focus on the soothing sound of your breath, like the ocean's waves. Allow this sound to bring you peace and clarity.

- *Inhale slowly through your nostrils, slightly constricting the back of your throat to create a soft ocean-like sound. Imagine waves, gently rolling in. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Exhale slowly through your nostrils, maintaining the ocean sound, imagining the waves receding. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

Continue for several minutes.

When you're ready, let your breath return to normal. Gently open your eyes again.



5. 5-5-5 Breathing

The 5-5-5 Breathing exercise creates mental space and calmness. By focusing on equal timing, this exercise helps alleviate stress and encourages a more open and creative mind.

Script:

Sit comfortably with your spine straight and eyes closed. Take a moment to settle in and relax your body.

- *Inhale deeply through your nostrils for five seconds. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*
- *Hold the breath gently for five seconds. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*
- *Exhale slowly through your mouth for five seconds. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*

Notice the sense of calm that begins to fill your mind and body. Allow this calmness to create space for creativity and inspiration. Let your thoughts drift away, focusing on the gentle flow of your breath.

Continue this pattern for 5 minutes, allowing yourself to sink deeper into relaxation with each cycle.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.



6. Mindful Breathing with Visualisation

This exercise combines deep breathing with visualisation, enhancing imagination and inspiration.

Script:

Allow yourself to become present in this moment. This exercise encourages a free flow of ideas and mental clarity with each breath.

Let's start:

- *Take a deep inhale through your nostrils, imagining fresh energy and ideas flowing into your mind. Picture this breath as a stream of inspiration and choose a color for this wave of breath. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Release the breath slowly through your mouth and visualise any stress or creative blocks leaving your body. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

Continue this breathing and visualisation for 5 minutes.

Let this practice guide you to new insights and possibilities. Allow your imagination to wander freely with each breath. Visualise different creative ideas taking shape in your mind.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.