

Four-Seven-Eight Breath

What is Four Seven Eight Breath?

This exercise is simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere. This exercise helps in reducing anxiety, increasing oxygen flow through your blood and helps to ground you.

How to Do it?

Best done sitting but can be done standing or lying down:

1. Sit with your back straight and your hands resting comfortably in your lap or on your thighs. Look ahead...try not to fix your gaze on anything in particular. Slightly closing your eyes helps. Try to focus internally on your breathing. All inhalations are done through your NOSE; all exhalations through your MOUTH. Throughout the exercises *keep the tip of your tongue in contact with the top of your mouth, just behind your top teeth.*
2. Begin inhaling slowly, smoothly and deeply to a mental count of 4 seconds. Fill your lower lungs first (by pushing out your abdomen), then your middle and upper lungs. Hold your breath for a mental count of 7 seconds.
3. Slowly and smoothly exhale for a mental count of 8 seconds. As you exhale, try to let go of all your anxiety, tension & stress.

That's one round. Pause briefly without inhaling then start another round. This natural pause is very therapeutic and relaxing.

Summary: Inhale for 4 seconds - Hold for 7 seconds - Exhale for 8 seconds - Pause briefly - Repeat.

Tips for how to do it:

- If you lose your breath, stop, breathe freely then try again
- With practice your pauses between rounds will naturally get longer
- Soothing music or ear plugs can help reduce external distractions

Why do it:

- Calms your mind
- Tones your nervous system
- Regulates your breathing
- Balances your emotions

When and Where to do it:

- Can be done anywhere - on the bus to school, at your desk, in a line, at work, or before a test.
- Any time you are feeling a bit anxious, angry, and upset or could just use a boost of relaxation, you may engage in this exercise.

Reference:

Weil, A. (1995). *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health: A Proven Program for Taking Full Advantage of Your Body's Natural Healing Power*. New York, NY. Random House Publishing.

Provided by Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands

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