

Using Controlled Breathing

Controlled breathing, also called square breathing, can be helpful when feeling stressed, as it helps to slow the breathing down. While you breath, thoughts may come into your mind. That is just the way the mind works. Try not to push them away, but keep going back to your breathing. Concentrate on the air going in and out regardless of the thought.

1 Stand or sit comfortably

Sit or stand comfortably, relax your body as much as you can, and let your shoulders drop. If you are slouched forward your chest muscles are restricted and you will not be able to fill your lungs properly.



2 Breath in

Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into the bottom of your lungs, filling them. Try to keep your mouth shut. Your belly should move out as you breathe in. Your chest should move only very slightly.



3 Pause

Slowly breathe in, try and make the breath last to the count of three. Pause for a brief moment



4 Breath out

Then begin to slowly exhale through your mouth. Try to make the breath last to the count of 5. Keep your breathing slow and smooth and calm and even.



Or

Inhale for 4 seconds; hold for 4 seconds; exhale for 4 seconds; hold for 4 seconds.

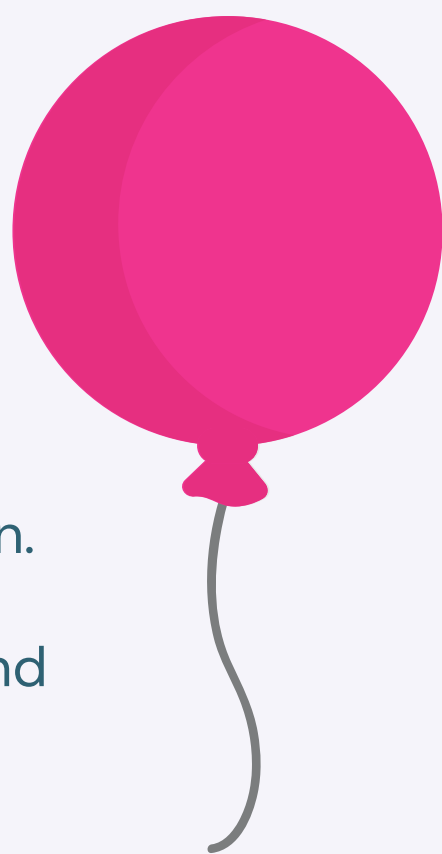
Tip #1

Sometimes it can help to imagine a balloon in your belly.

As you breathe in through your nose the balloon should inflate and your belly rise up.

As you breathe out the balloon deflates and your belly moves down.

You can check this by putting a hand on your belly.



Tip #2

Whilst practising this kind of breathing people first feel that they aren't getting enough air and want to take gulps. However, with practice you will find that this slower rate of breathing is more comfortable and will reduce anxiety and other physical feelings of discomfort. Remember to breath slowly and evenly.

