

Breathing Your Way toward Mental Clarity

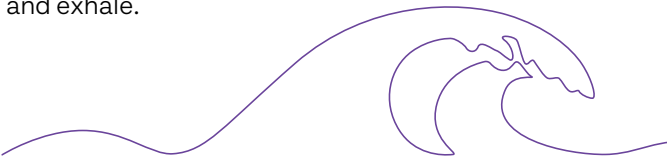
Breathing doesn't just impact you physically, but mentally as well. Wellcoaches provides tips to help you breathe properly with calm and focus.

Take control of your breathing

Next time your mind is racing and you feel a shortness of breath, focus on inhaling and exhaling through your nose, deep and slow. Add a conscious pause, giving yourself a shortcut to a calm and still mind.

Ocean-sound breath

Try to make an ocean sound with your breath. Slow the pace, breathing in and out slowly and deeply. This sound helps slow the pace of breathing because we are constricting the epiglottis muscle on the inhale and exhale.



Try this

Experiment with a four-part breath, counting to five on a full, slow, deep inhale and a pausing for three at the top of the inhale. Then count to five or more on a slow, full exhale, and pause at the bottom of the exhale for three or longer until the natural urge to inhale arrives.



You should notice a stillness of the mind when you gently pause at the top and the bottom of the breath.

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Nose breathing

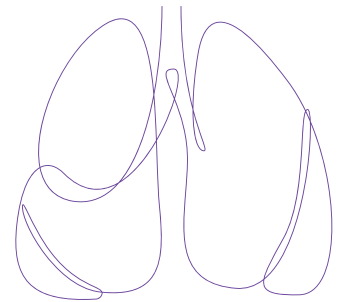
Give extra attention to breathing through your nose, which engages the body's air filtration system, the tiny hairs (cilia) in nasal passages designed to protect the lungs from foreign invaders like viruses.



Breathe deeply

You can prevent triggering a stress response in the lungs by avoiding quick, shallow breaths.

Breathing low and deep stimulates the nerves at the bottom of the lungs, activating the relaxation response (parasympathetic nervous system). Nasal, diaphragmatic breathing enhances the production of nitric oxide in the nasal passages, which boosts the immune system.



Take long, slow breaths

Breathing deeply lengthens and slows the pace of the breath. When the rate of breathing is fewer than 10 breaths per minute (six seconds per breath), the relaxation response is activated.

When we breathe at a rate of four to six breaths a minute (10-15 seconds per breath), the heart rate slows down and heart rate variability improves.

Slow down