



4Directions Counseling
Mind. Body. Heart. Spirit.

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Breathing Exercises

The following breathing exercises gently guide the autonomic nervous system back into the parasympathetic, or resting, state. By practicing these techniques on a daily basis, you not only increase the relaxation response in the body, but you create new habitual patterns of breathing on a regular basis. When the nervous system is habituated to be in the relaxation response, you decrease symptoms of fear, anxiety, depression, and pain. The relaxation response also increases the body's natural healing response.

Begin all breathing exercises by finding a comfortable position, sitting or lying down, where the chest can rest comfortably in an open posture.

Bumble-bee Breath

1. Inhale completely through the nose
2. Exhale through the nose while making a “mmmmmmmm” sound like a bumble bee – allow the exhalation to last as long as possible
3. Repeat x5

3-part Inhale

Allow the inhalation to take three parts, breathing into the lower ribs (step 1), middle ribs (step 2), and upper ribs (step 3)

1. Breathe in for 1 count, pause
2. Breathe in for 1 count, pause
3. Breathe in for 1 count, pause
4. Exhale completely
5. Repeat

3-part Exhale

Allow the exhalation to take three parts

1. Inhale completely
2. Exhale for 1 count, pause
3. Exhale for 1 count, pause
4. Exhale for 1 count, pause
5. Repeat

For use during anxiety or panic attack:

1-5 Count

1. Inhale for 1 count
2. Exhale for 1 count
3. Repeat steps 1-2 increasing the count by one each time
4. If having difficulty reaching five counts easily, repeat each count twice before increasing