

## Breathing Techniques

### Cultivating Peace and Easing Anxiety Through Mindfulness Strategies

By Antoinette Miller

These mindful breathing techniques serve as tools to help improve self-awareness and quiet a racing mind. They help to bring you back to the present moment and are a way to build resilience to anxiety, anger, and stress.

Mindfulness Strategy	Purpose
<p><b><u><a href="#">The 333 Rule for Anxiety</a></u></b><sup>1</sup></p> <p>To calm your mind, name three things that you see, three things that you hear, and move three parts of your body.</p>	Use this strategy to bring you back to the present when you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious.
<p><b><u><a href="#">Mindful Breathing (Infinity Symbol)</a></u></b><sup>2</sup></p> <p>While in a comfortable seated position, visualize an infinity symbol (a figure 8 symbol on its side). “Trace the infinity symbol with one finger while breathing in and out. Inhale as you follow one half of the symbol and exhale as you follow the other half.”</p>	This technique helps to reduce stress, increase alertness, and boost your immune system.
<p><b><u><a href="#">Mindful Breathing (STAR Breathing)</a></u></b><sup>3</sup></p> <p>Spread your palm out like a star. Trace the outline of your hand with the index finger of your other hand. Inhale as you trace up from the base of your wrist to the tip of your thumb. Briefly hold. Exhale as you trace down the other side of your thumb. Repeat this process for each finger. As you trace up, you inhale. As you trace down, you exhale. Repeat on the other hand.</p>	This technique helps you bring awareness to your mind-body connection and can help with both relaxation and energy.
<p><b><u><a href="#">Mindful Breathing (Box Breathing)</a></u></b><sup>4</sup></p> <p>While in a comfortable seated position, close your eyes and visualize a box. Inhale slowly while counting to four. Visualize drawing a line up the first side of the box. Hold your breath while counting to four. Exhale slowly while visualizing drawing the line along the second side of the box. Hold your breath while counting to four. Slowly inhale for a while counting to four, completing the third side of the box. Exhale slowly while visualizing drawing the fourth line. Repeat this process several times.</p>	This technique can help you return your breathing to its normal rhythm when dealing with stress.

<sup>1</sup> Nebraska Medicine. (n.d.). *Anxiety*. University Health Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. <https://health.unl.edu/anxiety>

<sup>2</sup> Rothstein, L., & Stromme, D. (n.d.). *Box breathing*. University of Minnesota Extension. <https://extension.umn.edu/two-you-video-series/box-breathing>

<sup>3</sup> National Learning Network. (n.d.). *STAR or hand breathing exercise*. Maynooth University, National University of Ireland. <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/STAR%20or%20Hand%20Breathing%20Exercise.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Montes, S. (2021, Summer). *Contentment connection: Easy ways to nourish your vagus nerve to become more content*. The American Institute of Stress. <https://www.stress.org/contentment-connection-easy-ways-to-nourish-your-vagus-nerve-to-become-more-content>