

BREATHE

Your breath is a powerful tool for stress management and healing. You can calm your nervous system, stop stress signals, and create a healthier state by using your breath.

Use your breath to reset, relax, and refocus.

Abdominal breathing, or "belly breathing" helps you move from sympathetic "fight or flight" state into parasympathetic "rest and digest" calm and healing state.

Take "breathing breaks" throughout your day. Spend 3-5 minutes (or even 1 minute!) bringing your attention to your breath and practicing deep breathing.

How can you remind yourself to do this?

Box Breath

- Inhale for a count of 4
- Hold for a count of 4
- Exhale for a count of 4
- Hold for a count of 4
- Imagine going around all four sides of a square or a box while you breathe.
- Continue for at least four cycles

Longer Exhale

- Make your exhale 1.5 or 2 times longer than your inhale.
- For example, inhale for a count of 3, exhale for a count of 6
- Inhale for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 6.
- See if you can lengthen your exhale further over time.

Belly Breathing

- Put one hand over your chest and one hand over your lower belly.
- Take a slow breath in through your nose.
- Feel your belly expand under your hand, like a balloon inflating.
- Exhale through your mouth, feeling your belly deflate like a balloon.

Heart-Focused

- Begin to breathe a little more slowly and deeply than usual.
- Imagine your breath is flowing in and out through your heart, or the center of your chest.
- Bring to mind a positive, renewing emotion, such as love or gratitude.
- Continue to imagine your breath flowing in and out through your heart as you focus on this emotion.