

# The Power in the Pause



Breathing is something we do every moment of our lives, yet most of us rarely think about it. When life becomes stressful, our breathing often becomes fast, shallow, or tight without us even noticing. Learning to breathe with awareness can be a powerful tool for improving mental health, emotional balance, and overall well-being.

Our breath is closely connected to our nervous system. When we are stressed, scared, or overwhelmed, the body goes into “fight, flight, or freeze” mode. In this state, breathing becomes quick and shallow, sending a message to the brain that danger is present.

Slow, deep breathing sends the opposite message. It tells the brain and body that it is safe to relax. This activates the calming part of the nervous system, helping the heart rate slow down, muscles soften, and the mind feel more at ease. In this way, breathing becomes a natural way to calm anxiety and reduce stress.

Breathing does not have to be complicated.

Here are a few simple ways to use breath to support your mental health:

## 4-7-8 Breathing

Inhale through your nose for 4 counts.  
Hold your breath for 7 counts.  
Exhale slowly through your mouth for 8 counts.  
This technique helps ease stress and promote better sleep.

## Belly Breathing

Sit or lie down comfortably.  
Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.  
Inhale deeply through your nose, letting your belly rise.  
Exhale slowly through your mouth.  
Repeat for a few minutes to calm your nervous system.

## Mindful Breathing

Simply observe your breath without trying to change it.  
Notice the sensation of air entering and leaving your body.  
When your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breath.

## Box Breathing (4-4-4-4 method)

Inhale through your nose for 4 counts.  
Hold your breath for 4 counts.  
Exhale through your mouth for 4 counts.  
Hold again for 4 counts.  
Repeat several cycles to regain focus and reduce anxiety.

Breathing is one of the most accessible and powerful tools for mental health. It is always available, free, and can be used anywhere. By becoming more aware of your breath, you can calm your body, regulate emotions, improve focus, and support healing. Honoring your breath is a simple yet meaningful way to care for mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Every breath is a new beginning. No matter how heavy the moment feels, your next breath is a chance to reset, to soften, and to return to yourself. Healing does not always start with big changes — sometimes it begins with one slow, intentional breath.