

## 8 Simple, Practical Breathing Techniques

Breathing techniques may be used for immediate reduction of anxiety and tension. Breathing techniques can be used in any place, any time, and no one will know you are practicing.

1. **Diaphragmatic breathing:** Also known as belly breathing. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen then take a deep breath in your nose expanding your abdomen and keeping your chest still. As you breathe out, gently contract your abdomen and breathe out your mouth.
2. **Smell the flower & blow out the candle:** For very young children learning about deep breathing, ask them to pretend to smell a flower deeply as they inhale and to pretend to blow out a candle as they exhale.
3. **Breathing countdown:** Breathe in slowly and as you breathe out say 10, then breathe in slowly, and in your next exhale say 9, and so on until you have counted down to 1.
4. **Square breathing:** Visualize an image of a square. On your in-breath mentally trace a vertical and then horizontal line. During your out-breath mentally trace the remaining vertical and then horizontal line completing the square.
5. **Counting breaths:** 1, 2, 3, 4 breathe in then 1, 2, 3, 4 breathe out.
6. **Repeating mantra:** During in breath say "I am" and during out breath say "at peace." You can also create your own mantra.
7. **Visualization:** Visualize a soothing, relaxing, or peaceful color. As you inhale imagine breathing in that color. Visualize a color that represents anxiety, stress, or tension leaving you as you exhale.
8. **Breath space counting:** Count the space in between your in-breath and out-breath. Breathe in and as you hold your breath slowly counting 1,2,3, then breathe out and repeat.



Just Breathe