

Give Yourself a Break Transcript

This is Ali Smith.

When you have a lot going on, it can feel overwhelming. Those are the times when it's easy to lose your temper, act impulsively, or just feel stressed out and unhappy. Giving yourself even a few minutes of space to get quiet, clear your head, and calm your nerves, will help.

This simple breathing method takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere. It might be helpful to practice a few times before you get overwhelmed, so you can drop right into it when you need it the most.

All the breathing in this practice will be done through your nose, with your belly and lungs expanding on the inhale, and then falling and contracting with every exhale.

Let's try it now.

Take a seat. Sit up tall, make sure your feet are flat on the ground, and either soften your gaze or close your eyes if you feel comfortable enough to do so.

Begin by noticing the feeling of your feet firmly rooted on the floor and your body's connection to the chair you are sitting in.

Inhale deeply through your nose, expanding your belly and lungs.

Pause on that breath.

Exhale fully, emptying your lungs and contracting your belly.

Inhale again deeply through your nose, expanding your belly and lungs.

Pause on that breath.

Exhale fully, emptying your lungs and contracting your belly.

Inhale again deeply through your nose, expanding your belly and lungs.

Pause on that breath.

Exhale fully, emptying your lungs and contracting your belly. Try to feel the stress and tension leave your body with the breath.

Inhale long, slow, and deeply through your nose, expanding your belly and lungs.

Pause on that breath.

Exhale, emptying your lungs and contracting your belly. Try to feel yourself becoming more relaxed with each exhale.

Inhale one last time, nice and long and slow, and deeply through your nose, expanding your belly and lungs.

Pause on that breath.

Exhale fully, emptying your lungs and contracting your belly.

These next few breaths, try to make them audible, so you can hear the inhale as well as the exhale.

Inhale deeply through your nose, so you can hear the breath, filling your belly and lungs.

Hold that breath and lock your chin to your chest. Hold it for a few seconds.

And bring your head up and exhale that breath all the way out, making sure you can hear the sound of that exhale, emptying your lungs and belly completely.

Inhale again deeply and audibly, filling your belly and lungs.

Hold the breath and lock your chin to your chest. Again, hold onto it for a few seconds.

Now bring your chin up and exhale that breath all the way out, emptying your belly and lungs. Remember to make the breath audible.

Inhale deeply.

Hold the breath and lock your chin to your chest.

Lift your head and exhale that breath all the way out.

Inhale deeply.

Hold the breath. Chin to chest.

Lift your head and exhale.

One last time, inhale deeply.

Hold onto that breath and lock your chin to your chest.

Raise your head and exhale that breath all the way out.

Now relax your breath, let your body breathe naturally and effortlessly.

As you breathe, take notice of how your breath feels. How it feels going in and out of your nose and the feeling of the rising and falling of your belly with each breath.

Allow any physical sensations to drift away and pay attention to your breath. If anything distracts you, just acknowledge it and bring your attention back to the feeling of your breath.

Now along with feeling the breath, pay attention to how it sounds. No matter how soft or loud your breath is, notice and hold your attention there. Pay attention to the sound of every inhale and every exhale.

All of your focus should be on feeling and hearing every inhale and every exhale. If you get distracted by a sound or a feeling, just acknowledge it and bring your focus back to the feeling and hearing the breath.

Now slowly bring your focus away from the breath and back to your body. Begin by slowly wiggling your fingers and toes. Roll your ankles and wrists. Move your head a little bit from side to side. And slowly, slowly open your eyes.

Notice if you feel a bit more centered and calm, and ready to get back to your day.