

breath ☁ as an anchor ⚓

Focus starts with your breathing: your most powerful mental tool

FACTS

- ☁ Your breath is **the only bodily function** you can consciously control.
- ☁ Breathing is the simplest form of **self-regulation** and is always *available*.
- ☁ **Key benefit 1 Focus:** when you pay attention to your breath, you are not focusing on whatever is bothering or distracting you.
Your brain can only focus on one thing at a time, and you are now directing that attention to your breathing.
- ☁ **Key benefit 2 Regulation:** calm breathing **activates your vagus nerve**.
This nerve helps regulate the parasympathetic nervous system: it supports **rest, recovery and relaxation**. Effective breathing gives your body the signal: *it is safe*. As a result, your heart rate drops, muscle tension decreases, and you can think more clearly again.

SKILLS – breathing the right way

- Good breathing is deeper: you use your **diaphragm**.
 - Check: place your hand on your lower abdomen.
 - Direct your breath “low”:
 - Your lower abdomen moves: it expands outward as you breathe in and
 - Your lower abdomen draws back in as you breathe out.
- Breathe in through your **nose** (it has a built-in filter); breathe out through your nose or mouth.
- Make your **exhale** slightly **longer** – this supports relaxation.
- Focus on the rhythm. Think of your breath as the **command center** for your nervous system.

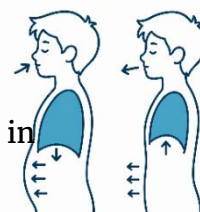


OPTIONS

- Choose 1 of the exercises below.
- Practice it daily in calm moments
(for example in the morning, while traveling, or before sleep).
- Start with 1.5 minutes. Gradually build to 15–20 minutes a day.
- ☁ You practice your breathing the way you practice your muscles: regularly, with attention.

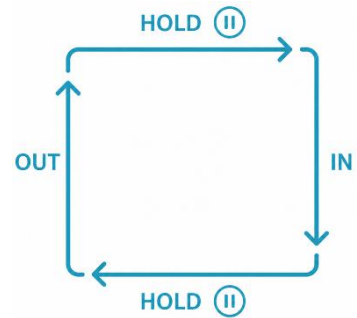
1. Abdominal breathing (diaphragmatic)

- Place 1 hand on your chest, 1 on your abdomen
- Breathe calmly in through your nose → your abdomen expands
- Breathe slowly out through your mouth → your abdomen draws back in
- + Helps release tension
- + Sends signals of calm to your brain



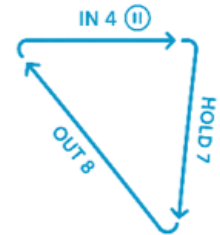
2. Box breathing (4 – 4 – 4 – 4)

- Breathe in for 4 counts
- Hold for 4 counts
- Breathe out for 4 counts
- Hold “empty” for 4 counts
- + Good to release muscle tension and regain focus.
- + Used by Navy SEALs and elite athletes.



3. 4-7-8 (triangle) breathing

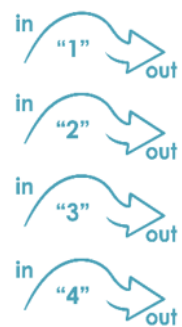
- Breathe in for 4 counts
- Hold for 7 counts
- Breathe out for 8 counts
- + A powerful way to calm your nervous system.
- + Ideal for sleep or recovery.



4. Counting the breath

Count each breath (= in and out) in your head.

- Breathe in “1”, breathe out slowly (count to 8)
- Breathe in “2”, breathe out slowly (count to 8)
- If you get distracted (you will!): be proud that you noticed it and start again at 1
- + Meditative focus.
- + Improves concentration and increases mental clarity.



5. Mantra breathing

Connect words or phrases to your breathing, for example

- In: “I am calm”
- Out: “I trust myself”

- + Boosts your mindset.
- + Strengthens focus and self-image **Tip:** only use phrases you believe!



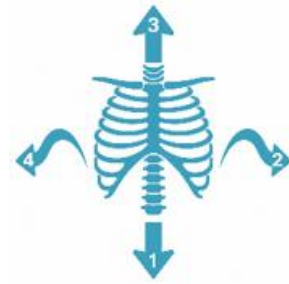
- I am focused
- I can do this
- Unbreakable
- I am strong
- I am in a flow
- I am unstoppable
- I am fit
- I trained for THIS
- Do not stop

- Locked in
- I got this
- Go, go, go, go
- Focus
- Right here, Right now
- Power
- Push
- Breathe, believe & battle
- Bring it on
- Yes!

6. 4D breathing

Breathe in for 4 counts:

- 1st count: “send” the air to the front of your rib cage
- 2nd count: “send” the air to the right side of your rib cage
- 3rd count: “send” the air to the back of your rib cage
- 4th count: “send” the air to the left side of your rib cage
- Hold for 1 count
- Breathe out for 5–6 counts
- + Good for concentration and muscle relaxation.
- + Helps you gain control over your breathing and muscles more quickly.



7. Breathing with a sigh

- Take a deep breath in,
- Hold for 1 count,
- Breathe out audibly (a sigh is fine)
- Repeat 5 times

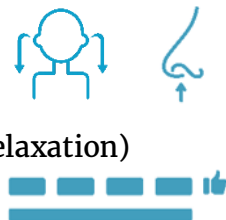


+ Quick reset for stress or frustration after a mistake, when something went differently than expected, or before a tense moment

TIPS & TRICKS

Tips for posture & effectiveness

- Sit or stand tall – *elbows slightly back (open lungs), create as much distance as possible between your shoulders and ears*
- Breathe in through your nose (better for filtering, air quality and relaxation)
- Repeat: a **short practice** every day is better than one long practice



BENEFITS

Good breathing can provide benefits including:

- Air in the lungs is refreshed → improved lung function
- More oxygen directly to your brain, organs and muscles
- Lower heart rate and stabilized blood pressure
- Increased energy levels
- Improved removal of lactic acid* from your muscles (recovery!)
*this builds up during intense exercise (muscle soreness)
- Calmer mind, better sleep, more focus
- Stronger immune system
- More calm in peak moments
- Better able to handle setbacks and pressure



FINALLY

Just like sport: you practice this

Breathing technique is a skill.

Do not wait until you are under pressure; practice it **daily in calm moments**.

Practice often, so it becomes familiar.

This is how you learn to switch: first in calm moments and later – consciously – also during

- the game,
- after mistakes or
- right before that one important moment.



GOOD LUCK!!