

Relaxation Techniques

These relaxation exercises are focused breathing techniques which help reduce anxiety and tension. These techniques can be performed with your eyes open or closed. You can also do them at any time and no one will even know.

For all these exercises, make sure you are breathing from your diaphragm – that means from your belly, not your chest. If you are having trouble, try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in and falling about an inch as you breathe out. If this is difficult, lie on your back or your stomach; you will be more aware of your breathing pattern. Remember, it is impossible to breathe from your diaphragm if you are holding in your stomach, so relax your stomach muscles.

Technique 1

Count very slowly to yourself from ten down to zero, one number for each breath. With the first breath from your diaphragm, say “ten” to yourself, with the next breath, say “nine,” and so on. If you start feeling light-headed or dizzy, count more slowly. When you get to “zero,” see how you are feeling. If you are better, great! If not, try again.

Technique 2

As you inhale, count very slowly up to four; as you exhale, count slowly back down to one. As you inhale, say to yourself “one, two, three, four”; as you exhale, say “four, three, two, one.” Do this several times.

Technique 3

After each time you inhale, pause for a few seconds. After you exhale, pause again for a few seconds. Do this for several breaths.

Good times to use a relaxation technique

- Before you take a test or exam.
- When someone says something that bothers you.
- When waiting for an important phone call.
- Before going on a date.
- When you feel overwhelmed by a project or homework.
- While standing in line.
- Before an athletic game.
- Before giving a presentation, etc.

Source: Midwest Youth Services <https://mys-kids.org/information-for-kids/ways-to-deal-with-anger>

More techniques: HelpGuide

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm>