

FOUR QUICK AND EFFECTIVE STRESS-REDUCING BREATHING TECHNIQUES

A photograph of four people (three women and one man) sitting in a row on the floor, eyes closed, in a meditative pose. They are in a room with large windows in the background, letting in bright, natural light. The person on the far right is a man with dark hair, wearing a dark green t-shirt. The three women to his left are wearing light-colored tops (green, white, and beige). They are all sitting cross-legged on a light-colored rug.

BREATHING TECHNIQUES ARE A GREAT WAY TO CALM YOUR MIND. BELOW ARE FOUR OF THE EASIEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE BREATHING TECHNIQUES FOR BALANCING MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT.

BY: DR. AKHU

Belly Breathing is a very effective breathing technique. You turn off the body's stress system by completely filling and emptying your lungs. Here's how to do it:

- **Lie on your back, either in your bed or on the floor. Place a pillow under your head and knees if you are on the floor.**
- **Place your right hand over your heart and your left hand over your belly.**
- **Breathe in slowly through your nose until your lungs cannot expand anymore.**
- **Breathe out slowly until your lungs are empty.**
- **As you breathe, you should notice the hand on your belly rise and fall while the hand on your chest is still.**
- **Take three to six more deep breaths.**

Belly breathing is a great technique to teach children. Place a light toy, like a boat, on the child's tummy and have them watch it go up and down as they breathe deeply.



BELLY BREATHING

Another effective breathing technique is called Breath Focus. Breath Focus is when you use your brain to focus on the physical and mental effects of breathing. Here's how you can practice Breath Focus:

- Close your eyes.
- Take four slow deep breaths.
- As you breathe in, imagine the air entering your nose, going down your throat, and swirling around in your body.
- As you breathe out, imagine stress and tension physically leaving your body with the air.
- If this feels good, continue until all the stress is gone.



BREATH FOCUS

Ahh Breathing is one of the best breathing techniques for stress and anger reduction. You might sound funny when you practice this breathing technique, but it will be worth it. Here's how to do it:

- **Close your eyes.**
- **Inhale deeply through your nose so that your lungs are completely filled.**
- **As you exhale, contract your throat, making a raspy "ahh" sound as you release air through your open mouth.**
- **Repeat at least four times.**



AHH BREATHING

As you may know, I have been a dancer all my life. Dancer Breathing is a regular part of the warm-up or cool-down sequence in dance classes. Don't worry, you don't have to be a dancer or have good coordination to do it. Dancer Breathing is especially effective in relieving muscle tension. Here's how to do it:

- Stand up.
- Exhale as you bend forward at the waist, let your arms hang limply, hands pointed toward your toes. (don't try to touch your toes, your body should be loose and relaxed, allowing the tension drain out of your fingertips)
- Inhale slowly and deeply while you return to a standing position. Stand up by moving your body in a rolling motion starting at your lower back. Your head should be the last thing lifted.
- Repeat three to six times.



DANCER BREATHING