

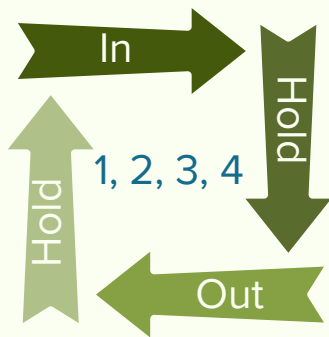
# Intentional Breathing

TO HELP YOUR MIND AND BODY

When under stress, the body's sympathetic nervous system (SNS) becomes activated, increasing heart rate, breathing rate, and releasing cortisol, a stress hormone. **Practicing intentional, slower breathing can activate the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), responsible for calming the body and promoting relaxation.** Engaging the PNS through breathing can lead to reduced levels of cortisol (leading to decreased stress and tension), improved oxygen flow to the brain (enhancing clarity and concentration), and increased levels of GABA (a calming neurotransmitter that alleviates anxiety). **These effects provide a natural means to manage daily stress and support mental resilience.**

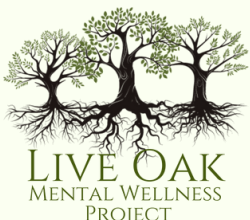
## Box Breathing

Box breathing is a structured, rhythmic breathing technique that regulates the breath in four equal parts, promoting immediate relaxation and focus. This technique is often used in high-stress environments due to its simplicity and effectiveness in calming the mind.



- How to Practice: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts, and hold again for 4 counts. Repeat this cycle several times.
- Benefits: Reduces anxiety, sharpens mental focus, and provides a quick reset during stressful situations.

Learn additional intentional breathing techniques and more about the link between breathing and mental health from the article [“How Breathing Affects Mental Health: The Science Behind Calm”](#) on [breatheology.com](#).



[LiveOakMentalWellnessProject.com](https://LiveOakMentalWellnessProject.com)

# Intentional Breathing

TO HELP YOUR MIND AND BODY

## Belly Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing (aka Belly Breathing or Abdominal Breathing) is the basis for many meditation and relaxation techniques, which can lower your stress levels, lower your blood pressure, and regulate other critical bodily processes.



1. Sit or lie down on a comfortable, flat surface.
2. Relax your shoulders, shifting them downward away from the ears.
3. Put a hand on your chest and a hand on your stomach.
4. Without straining or pushing, breathe in through your nose until you can't take in any more air.
5. Feel the air moving through your nostrils into your abdomen, expanding your stomach and sides of the waist. Your chest remains relatively still.
6. Purse your lips as if sipping through a straw. Exhale slowly through your lips for 4 seconds and feel your stomach gently contracting.
7. Repeat these steps several times for best results.

Learn more about belly breathing techniques and benefits from the article "[What is Diaphragmic Breathing?](https://www.healthline.com/health/diaphragmatic-breathing)" on [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com).



Live Oak Mental Wellness Project is working to make mental health support more accessible. From spreading information about improving your mental wellness at home to connecting you to a clinical therapist to partnering with others in the mental health field to create new resources in person and in print, we want to help you learn how to make your life the very best it can be.

[LiveOakMentalWellnessProject.com](https://LiveOakMentalWellnessProject.com)