



Breathing Exercises for Stress or Anxiety Relief Factsheet

1. Abdominal Breathing

Abdominal breathing strengthens the abdominal muscles and acts as the foundation of any yoga practice. Expanding the lungs and breathing deeply helps your body take in more oxygen.

How to do ...

Begin lying down on your back with your knees bent and feet planted firmly on the floor. If this position is uncomfortable, alternatively you could try lying on your side. Make sure you are comfortable and support your body with any blankets or cushions to help you relax. Placing your right hand onto your belly and your left hand on your chest, breathe in through your nose and be aware of your abdomen expanding. Your chest should remain still during this process. Now, breathe out, feeling your belly deflating on your exhalation.

2. Counting Breaths

Counting your breaths helps your body and mind to relax and is a great exercise which helps cleanse away distracting thoughts and enhances your concentration.

How to do ...

Begin lying down on your back and place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Start to breathe deeply, inhaling to a count of five. Hold your breath for a count of eight, and then breath out slowly, to a count of nine. Focus on expelling all the air from your lungs as you breathe out while simultaneously, trying to relax your body.

3. Roll Breathing

Roll breathing enables you to use your lungs to their optimum capacity and encourages you to tune in with your breathing rhythm. This breath technique is a great way to relax achy muscles, release tension and stress, and also helps eliminate toxins from the body.

How to do ...

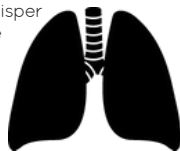
Similar to the abdominal breathing exercise – begin lying on your back with one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Take eight to ten cycles of the deep breathing exercise. Pay attention to the rise and fall of your abdomen, followed by the rise of your chest. As you exhale, make a whooshing sound as both your hands go down. Almost like a rolling wave.

4. Ujjayi Breathing

This breathing exercise is a yogic breathing technique, which helps to release tension, reduce stress levels, and ease anxiety. Ujjayi breathing helps maximise your body's energy levels and leaves you feeling physically, emotionally and mentally recharged.

How to do ...

Focus on breathing in and out deeply through your nose whilst keeping your mouth closed. As you inhale, the air will make a hissing noise. As you exhale, constrict the whisper muscles in the back of your throat and make the sound of the ocean.





Benefits of Breathing Exercises for Stress and Anxiety ...

Breathing deeply sends an electrical impulse to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then forwards this message onto your body, which deactivates stress responses such as increased heart rate, shallow breathing, and high blood pressure. Shallow breathing does not provide your body with sufficient oxygen, which is why practising these breathing exercises is very important to ensure your body gets plenty of oxygen.



Anxiety and stress are inevitably going to creep up on you at some point during your life, so it is important to learn key stress management techniques which help you manage these stresses and improve your overall health and quality of life.



When you're stressed and anxious you are likely to experience tired and achy muscles.

This is normal and is just a sign your body is responding to your anxious emotions. Practising these breathing exercises ensures your body receives plenty of oxygen which, in turn, helps offer relief from achy joints and painful muscles.



Practising these deep breathing exercises stimulates the release of endorphins, helping to improve your feelings of well-being and providing pain-relief.

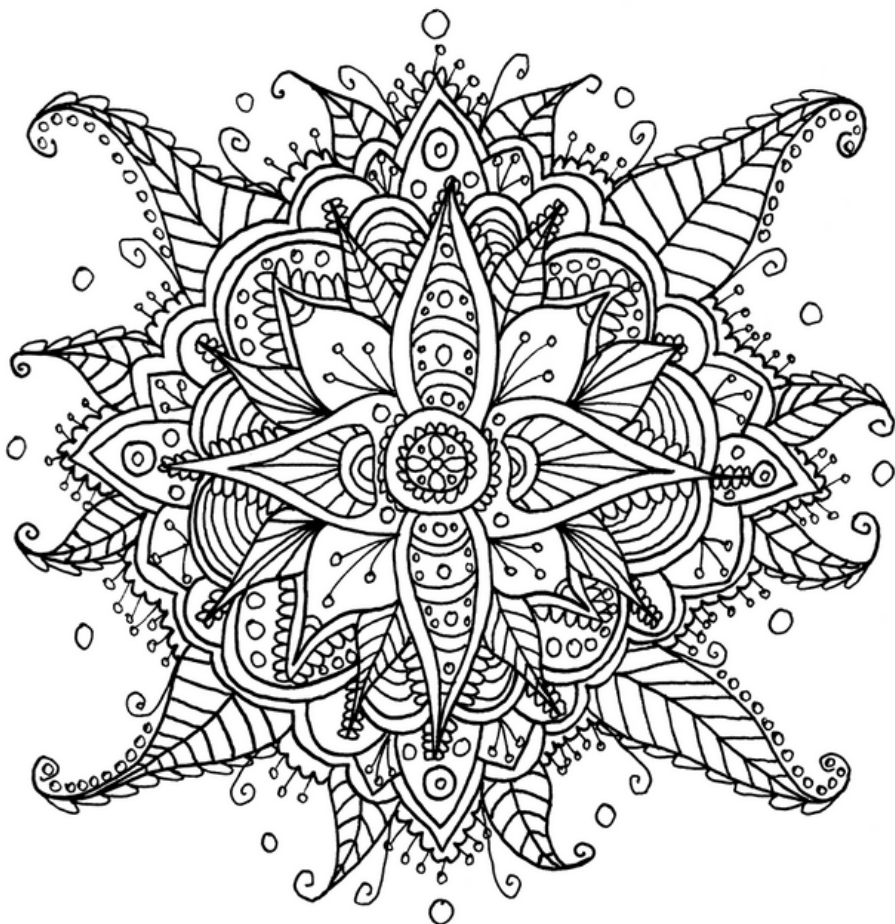


Deep breathing also aids the efficient function of the lymphatic system which stimulates the release of harmful toxins from the body. This helps detoxify your body and enables you to direct your energy to more productive functions.



Most importantly, these breathing exercises will help you remain calm and present during your day to day life, allowing you to live a more mindful and peaceful life with reduced levels of stress and anxiety.

Colour Me Mandala



Written by Claire Arnott.
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