

Breathing and stress

Breathing is tied to the stress response system. When you perceive something as dangerous or threatening, you breathe faster to get more oxygen to your muscles. When you consciously slow down your breathing, your brain activates the body's "relaxation response"—lowering pulse rate, respiration, and blood pressure.

Putting attention on the breath helps you focus on this moment, instead of getting lost in anxious thoughts. All those thoughts make the brain think it is in danger. Because of that, it can be very helpful to practice breathing.



- It is ideal to start practicing in a quiet place, but you can do it anywhere.
- Put one palm on your belly and the other on your chest.
- Experiment with taking slower and deeper breaths.
- Remember to pay attention to your breath more often throughout your busy day.

Some people find this a bit weird and uncomfortable at first. Making efforts not to feel your breathing only tends to make things worse and contribute to anxiety and panic attacks. If you just keep letting yourself feel the breath and just let the stress or anxiety do whatever it wants to do, even though it feels worse at the beginning, your breath and your anxiety will eventually settle down.

Focusing on breathing can lower your stress levels making you more present in the moment. That way, you are going to have a lot more time and energy to focus on dealing with problems as they arise.