

- Stress management

Five breathing techniques for stress relief

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Experienced health writer Paige Fowler, who regularly contributes to some of the leading health and wellness magazines and websites, has shared several breathing tips on WebMD. It is a global health information platform managed by a team of award-winning experts and professionals in medicine, journalism, health communication and content creation.

These pointers were reviewed by Nayana Ambardekar, MD, a board-certified general internist and an assistant professor of medicine at the Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Based on all this information, the Benilde Well-Being Center (BWC) of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) invites the general public to maximize the powers of the breath as a tool to de-stress through this collection of health reminders.

For optimal results, comfortable clothing is recommended. Some exercises are best done while seated, while others are accomplished lying down with a pillow under the head and knees.

Here are five drills to practice at home:

Deep breaths.
Short, shallow breaths consume energy. This makes you more anxious. Take deep breaths instead. Breathe in through your nose. Fill your belly with air. Then breathe out through your nose. Take three more full deep breaths.

Focus.
Whenever you breathe in, picture the air infused with peace and calmness. Feel it throughout your body. Now, imagine releasing all the stress and tension as you breathe out. Repeat this mantra: I breathe in peace and calm, I breathe out stress and tension. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes.

Equal time.
Breathe in, count to five. Breathe out, count to five. Once you are at ease, you may increase it up to 10 counts.

Relax muscles.
Lie comfortably on the floor. Breathe in as you tense the muscles on your feet. Count up to 10 before you release it. Proceed with your calves. Work your way up to your body. Include your legs, belly, chest, fingers, arms, shoulders, neck and face. This technique helps you relax physically and mentally.

Modified lion's breath.
Sit comfortably. Imagine that you are a lion. Breathe in through your nose. Fill your belly with air. Then open your mouth as wide as you can to release it with a big "HA!". Repeat several times.

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