

Mindful Breathing

A Construction Suicide Prevention Partnership Toolbox Talk

www.suicide-stops-here.org

Mindful breathing is a very basic yet powerful mindfulness meditation practice. The idea is simply to focus on your breathing—to its natural rhythm and flow and how it feels on each inhale and exhale. Focusing on the breath is particularly helpful because it serves as an anchor—something you can turn your attention to at any time if you feel stressed or carried away by negative emotions. It can also help you fall asleep at bedtime or return to sleep.

Practice Breathing Exercise

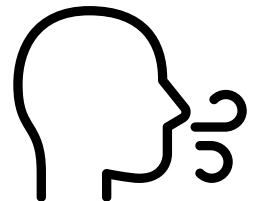
#1 Posture

- Find an alert, comfortable position on a chair, floor cushion, or bench.
- Sit with your spine erect.
- Rest your hands in your lap or wherever they feel comfortable.



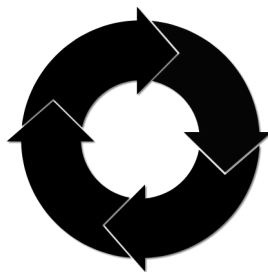
#2 Breathing

- Gently close your eyes, if you feel comfortable. You can also just soften your gaze, turning it towards a wall or the floor.
- Bring your attention to the natural sensations of the breath in the body
- Don't try to control your breath. It doesn't matter if it is short and shallow or long and deep.



#3 Attention

- Try to follow the breath through full cycles, from the beginning of inhalation to the end of an exhalation, and then on to the next cycle.



#4 Thinking

- Thoughts may enter the mind. This is natural. Simply allow them to arise and pass.
- If a chain of thought hijacks your attention and you lose awareness of the breath, gently return your attention to the sensations of breathing



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Discussion Questions

- How do you feel now compared to before the exercise?
- Where might you practice mindful breathing? At work? At home?
- Would anyone share some examples of when you have put mindful breathing to practice?
- Would anyone share when they might use mindful breathing in the future?



Try to practice daily to see what benefits mindful breathing might bring into your life. Consider practicing twice a day for 5 minute sessions.

Other Meditation Resources

- Help Guide Meditation Audio: <https://www.helpguide.org/meditations/mindful-breathing-meditation.html>
- Harvard Article on Meditation: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/breath-meditation-a-great-way-to-relieve-stress>
- Calm App: <https://www.calm.com/>
- Article on Other Meditation Apps: <https://www.mindful.org/free-mindfulness-apps-worthy-of-your-attention/>

