

4-7-8 BREATH RELAXATION EXERCISE

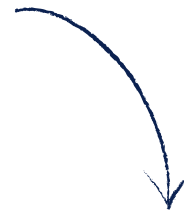
This is a very simple and useful tool to achieve general relaxation and manage stress.

BEGINNER TIPS

- Ideally sit with your back straight.
- Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth and keep it there the entire exercise.
- Exhale through your mouth around your tongue; try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.

STEPS

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 7.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of 8.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four.



ARE THE NUMBERS IMPORTANT?

The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important. The ratio of 4:7:8 is.

WHY SHOULD I DO IT?

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Unlike tranquilizing drugs, which are often effective when you first take them but then lose their power over time, this exercise is subtle when you first try it but gains in power with repetition and practice. Use it whenever anything upsetting happens — before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep.

HOW OFTEN?

Do it at least twice a day. You can't do it too frequently. Do four breaths in the morning and four breaths at night before bed. Don't do more than four breaths in one session initially. As you get better at it you can extend to eight breaths if you want.

