

SQUARE BREATHING

When you get anxious, your breathing patterns may change.

You begin to breathe faster, taking shallow breaths from your chest as opposed to deeper breaths from your abdomen.

At the extreme, you can hyperventilate which causes a decrease in carbon dioxide in your blood.

That makes your heart pump harder and faster to take in more carbon dioxide. You might begin to feel dizzy or disoriented.

Some people also experience tingling or numbness in their arms or legs.

The best thing to do is engage in Square Breathing as soon as you notice you're beginning to feel anxious or overly excited.

By doing that, you:

- » Move your breathing back down from your chest to your abdomen.
- » Restore the right balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your blood.
- » Ward off feelings of panic that might arise if you did nothing to stop them.
- » Get control over runaway emotions.

Here's How to Do It

Sit in a comfortable chair, or lie down if you like. You can also do it standing if it's not possible to sit. It's best to keep your back straight if possible, and for that, sitting is the best posture.

STEP 1:

Slowly exhale through your nose to a count of 4. Now inhale to a count of 4. Make sure to go slowly so that your incoming breath lasts over the full count. One . . . two . . . three . . . four. . . As you breathe in, slowly raise your shoulders up toward your ears. This allows the air to move up into your lungs.

STEP 2:

Hold for a count of four. Keep the same rhythm you used while inhaling.

STEP 3:

Exhale through your mouth slowly over a count of 4. You should completely empty your breath. As you exhale, lower your shoulders back to a normal resting place.

STEP 4:

After you've completely emptied your breath, hold for a count of 4 again. Some people find it difficult to hold for the full count when your breath is emptied all the way. If so, just reduce that count and begin inhaling to start the second set.

Repeat the whole cycle at least 4 times. You can do more repetitions if you still feel anxious.

It's good to take a small break between each set, but not too long. About 30 seconds to a minute works.

If you become uncomfortable in any way, just stop and come back to it later.

Square breathing can be done anywhere at any time. That's the beauty of it.

If you're prone to panic attacks, it's best to start the breathing cycle as soon as you begin feeling anxious and before you get into a full-blown panic situation.

For those who have a lot of ongoing anxiety, try making Square Breathing a regular practice and schedule it at least four times a day.

It's also very helpful before tackling something that's going to require a lot of brain power such as creative work.

It's An Energy Booster

On the flip side, square breathing is very energizing when you're feeling low on energy or lethargic. This is the opposite of feeling anxious.

If you do four rounds of Square Breathing when you feel tired or dull, you'll find it picks you up a bit and restores your brain power.

Add a full glass of water after your finished, and you'll have even more energy.