

Take a **Breath Break**

The simplest way to relax and find calm is to take slow, deep breaths. Here is a breath break. You're already breathing, but now you can think about it. Follow these steps:

1 Get in a comfortable position either sitting in a chair or lying on the floor. Be careful not to slouch, because that can restrict your breathing. Don't be stiff, but keep your spine as straight as you comfortably can.

2 As you slowly inhale, think of your belly as a balloon that you are blowing up. Place your hands on your belly as it expands and contracts. Watch your hands rise as you inhale and fall each time you exhale.

3 Fill your lungs and then empty them completely. You may want to push gently on your belly each time you exhale to ensure that you are emptying your lungs.

4 Breathe slowly. For a good pace, slowly count to five as you inhale; then count to five as you exhale. Pause briefly in the moment between exhaling and inhaling.

5 Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Doing so allows a slight cooling of the nasal passage that can actually cool your brain. A cool thinker really does make better decisions than a hothead, so chill.

6 As you slowly inhale and exhale, your heart rate and blood pressure will go down. As you slow down, your tensed muscles will also relax. They do so because you are soothing every muscle in your body with rich, oxygenated blood, enabling them to relax and rebuild.

7 While you breathe slowly, pay attention to the moment. If any thoughts come into your mind, don't engage them; simply notice them and let them go. Concentrate on your breathing in order to stay focused on the here and now.

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