

Relax Anywhere, Anytime

by 'Focusing on breathing'

How can I do it?

Practice with your eyes closed, whenever possible.

(A) Tip mode: Touch the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger. Breathe in, breathe out, **three times**, counting in the mind, when breathing out. During the first out-breath, count 'one', second out-breath 'two', third out-breath 'three'. Repeat the 3 breaths, at each of the next 3 finger tips. When you are at the thumb, place the tip of the index finger at the base of the thumb and breathe 3 times. Then switch to the other hand and repeat the practice. Continue practicing, switching the hands.

(B) Segment mode: Every finger has 3 segments, separated by 2 lines. Place the tip of the thumb at the top segment of the little finger. Breathe in and out once, normally, *without counting*. Shift the thumb to the middle segment and breathe in and out. Move to the bottom segment and breathe in and out. Then, repeat the same steps at the next 3 fingers. At the thumb, place the tip of the index finger on its segments and breathe in and out once, at each segment. Now switch to the other hand and repeat the same practice. Continue practicing, switching hands.
Advanced version: While breathing in, lift the pointing finger off the segment and while breathing out, keep it in contact.

(C) Counting mode: When breathing in, feel the faint coolness inside the nose and the on the top lip. When breathing out, count *slowly* in the mind. First out-breath, count 'o-n-e', second out-breath, 't-w-o-o' and third out-breath, 'thre-e-e'. Then restart counting from 'o-n-e' and keep going, as long as you like. Every time you lose track of counting, restart from 'o-n-e'

(D) Feeling mode: When breathing in, feel the faint coolness inside the nose and on the top lip. When breathing out, feel the faint warm or neutral sensation at these places. You can also focus on the slight expansion of the abdomen as you breathe in and contraction, as you breathe out. Don't use fingers. Don't count.

(E) Staring mode: Select a small but prominently visible spot, mark or object, before you, as a target. While continuously staring at it, practice any of the above modes.

(911) Breathe in through the nose or mouth. Breathe out gently through the mouth, with slightly open lips, focusing on the sensation at the lips and the bulging cheeks. In this mode, the out-breath is slow and long.

Children: For the first few sessions, adults need to show them how to practice. Children from 9 years can practice all the above modes. Those from 5 – 8 years can practice modes (A) to (C). 4 year olds can practice the Tip mode (A). For younger ones, try this simplified version of mode (A). Ask the child to count 'one', any time during the first breath cycle, 'two' during the second breath cycle, and 't-h-r-e-e' during the third breath cycle. Initially, ask the child to breathe only once, at each finger. Gradually increase it to twice and then thrice.

When Can I Practice?

Lying in bed, to get sleep: Start your practice when you lie in bed and wish to sleep. Begin with the 'segment' mode. When you feel sleepy, switch to the 'counting' mode. When you feel more sleepy, switch to the 'feeling' mode. Get convinced of its amazing power in inducing sleep.

As soon as you wake up: Practice any mode, still lying in bed. Change the body position, stretching the arms, legs, back etc., holding each position for 10-20 breaths. Sit up cross legged on the edge of the pillow and breathe for some time. Get off the bed and stand on the floor breathing for some time. Walk out of your bedroom feeling fresh. Spend enough time in this morning practice, to build up a reserve of calmness and better manage the day's stresses.

Home: Walking, cooking, cleaning, gardening etc. do not require thinking. These are great opportunities for relaxing in any mode. See how many breaths it takes for the repetitive activities like toasting the bread, filling the cup and loading the laundry.

Walking: To develop this practice, walk slowly using the 'counting mode' while. When breathing in, feel the coolness inside nose. When breathing out - every time a foot touches the ground, match it with the number being counted, repeating the same number, till the out-breath ends. (as an example: during the first out- breath, one, one, one so on)..After some practice, walk at the normal pace. In a few weeks, you can practice even while running!

Waiting: Whenever you wait, you may get bored and restless - for breakfast, lunch or dinner to be ready, computer to load, standing in a line, at the doctor's office etc. These are opportunities for mini relaxation. Practice any mode.

Traveling in Car / Bus / Train/ Air plane: Practice any mode.

Driving: Every stoppage at a red light is an opportunity for micro relaxation. Practice the 'staring' mode, staring at the red light, till it turns green.

Work Place: Whenever you walk in the parking lot, hallway or work area, practice walking as described above. Whenever you lose concentration, mind wanders, any part of body feels tight or you feel stressed, take a 1-2 minute break and practice any mode, to feel better.

Pain: If the pain is acute, practice the (911) mode 8 to 10 times. Alternate it with other modes till it eases. For chronic pains, lie down on the back with a thin pillow below the head, legs spread out and hands by the side. Let the body go loose, and practice the segment mode for prolonged periods of 30 - 45 minutes. This deeply relaxes the tight and painful muscles, partly relieves the pains and heals them. Follow up with gentle and slow stretching of the affected muscles, using your choice mode. Match movement with breathing. Breathe in while stretching and breathe out when returning.

Playing games: Practice any mode when waiting for the ball to reach you, feeling frustrated or angry on losing. Get back your focus on the game.

Exercising: Practice on the tread mill in any mode (A) to (D). When doing weights or resistance training, breath out through the mouth, with a 'haa' during the strenuous movements. Breathe in, deeply, during the light return movement.

Under stress: When angry, anxious, panicky or in pain, use the (911) mode, till you feel some relief. Alternate (911) with other modes till the crisis eases.

See the next 2 pages for variety of testimonials. Visit www.countingbreaths.com for the extensive feedback from practitioners, on how these practices help Mind, Body, Relationships and also relieve some Health problems.

Testimonials

Stress in Children: “One of the ways we **help children cope with stress** at Robert C. Parker School is by practicing the simple mindful breathing taught us by C.S. The breathing technique is practiced regularly by almost all the children in the school.”
Meg Taylor, Director of Robert C. Parker School at Wynantskill NY.

2 years

“I have a 2 year old daughter who was not sleeping well at night. She would constantly toss and turn all night and come morning time when I would go in to wake her up, she was absolutely miserable. I was then introduced to the ‘counting breaths’ method. I tried it with my daughter. To my surprise the next day, I woke up a completely differently little girl.... or so it seemed. **She was much happier and more co-operative with me** than the previous mornings. I also tried this method with her time out if she misbehaves. Once again to my surprise it worked. **Within a few moments, she would become much calmer and more relaxed.** “
Mother: Tara Wescott email: tekandy@aol.com

9-15 years

- * “I count my breaths when I am mad at my sister (4 year old), **so I don’t punch her**” Boy 9 years.
- * “I count my breaths in car, in bed in the morning, and when in **angry mood**. It **prevents being car sick, get active and awake and calm down.** “ Boy 9 years.
- * “I count my breaths before I go to bed. It **helps me fall asleep**” Girl 10 years.
- * “I count my breaths in bed, on the bus and when bored. It helps me in **calming myself when mad, in concentrating and when I get bored**” Girl 12 years.
- * “Counting my breaths **helps me think about things and not be bored.**” Boy 10 years.

Adults

Anger: See comments from children 9-15 years above. More reports in the web site*.

Anxiety: See Dr. Padma Sripada’s comments in the box on the next page.

Concentration: “I came to know about your ‘counting breaths’ method from a brochure I found at the Albany Hindu Temple. I am preparing for USMLE exam due in August 09 and I am really tensed at the moment. I have been practicing the method since 2 days and I am really feeling very much relieved of my stress. And **I am able to concentrate better on my studies**” A student preparing for Medical Residency Exam in USA .

Dental Work: The mother of a 10 year old boy who attended my classes said happily “My son was terrified of getting any dental work done. I had to postpone his visits several times. After I learned ‘Counting Breaths’, I taught this method to him at home and made him practice for a few days. When he was sitting in the dentist’s chair, I sat beside him and continuously said ‘breathe, breathe ... ‘. For the first time, he had his **dental visit without the usual panic**”.

Hypertension: A lady was regularly visiting her doctor for hypertension. Whenever she visited the doctor, her blood pressure was showing very high. She learned the relaxation methods in my classes and was determined to get over this problem. One day, she went to the doctor’s office well ahead of time and practiced counting breaths for about 20 minutes. **For the first time, the doctor found her pressure normal.** She reported this with a beaming face. More reports are in the web site*.

Insomnia: This is the most common benefit. Children of 5 years to seniors, whoever tried it, are able to sleep easily. See Dr. Sripada’s comments in the box on the next page, on how it helped avoid medications for some insomniacs. Also see the special article at: <http://www.countingbreaths.com/insomnia.html>

Job Stress: The principal and vice principal of a school, with about 1000 students, were in a lot of tension due to harassment, from parents visiting them and pressurizing them for admissions, improvement of marks, etc. After they started practicing this method, their response to the situation totally changed. **They were able to listen to the parents patiently and send them off with a smile.**

Migraine

A 53 year old person was suffering from migraine pains once a week, lasting a whole day, since 30 years. He was bearing the pain without taking any medicines, as the pain relievers were making him drowsy. Within 2 months of practicing the method, his migraine totally stopped and did not recur even once in 6 months. **He initially practiced the method for mental comfort, without expecting any relief from migraine. This benefit came as a pleasant side effect!** Many other reports are in the web site*.

Obesity

The senior librarian of the local library said he was practicing this technique mostly at bed time and enjoyed good sleep. **He also lost 15 pounds.** Asked how did it happen, he put both his index fingers at his temples and said "It is all here!". More reports are in the web site*.

Panic Attacks: See Dr. Padma Sripada's comments in the box below.

Pains (Chronic): "I practiced the 'segment' mode last four days, for about 30 minutes. The pains are reduced immediately and stay that way, for a few hours. I am also doing the light stretching exercises twice a day and they are **helping me in healing the arthritic pains** and also in sleeping through the night."

Another report: "These breathing techniques have helped me sleep at night and **reduced my Fibromyalgia pains** that I have been **suffering since last 19 years.** Now I am able to do my chores at home like vacuuming and also drive after a gap of many years!"

Quitting Smoking

"I was smoking a pack and half a day. I was introduced to the 'counting breaths' methods. After just a week of doing the method, once in the morning and right before bed, I was able to cut down smoking down to around 15 cigarettes a day from the previous 20 a day, by doing nothing more than the method. I now do it throughout the day and **I am down to about 4 cigarettes a day.** These are all due to doing the method: I am more relaxed and I don't need to lash out at everybody because I am edgy. The best part is, it costs me nothing to do, except for my effort into it. I didn't need any outside help like gum or patches; **I did it on my own which is a great feeling.** I highly recommend this for anyone of any age." - Michael S - mksmail800@verizon.net. More reports: <http://www.countingbreaths.com/annecdotes.html#Smoking>

Smiling Face

The grim non-smiling faces of the practitioners gradually change to a softer and **happy smiling look**, over a few months. See reports and photos: <http://www.countingbreaths.com/annecdotes.html#Smile>

Stuttering

A 55 year old person was **stuttering for more than 40 years.** He extended the practice even into his daily walking at any place. Within 2 months, his speech showed some improvement. In about 9 months, it was 90% normal.

Recommended by Doctors

"A simple, no expense, meditation-oriented approach to **stress reduction** which we recommend for all our patients (and ourselves!) is nicely presented at the following website: www.countingbreaths.com. Try it; you'll be glad you did!"

Peter Horvath MD, FACOG. Recommended in his web site 'www.albanyivf.com'

"The 'focusing on the breath' technique is appealing in its simplicity, and absence of restrictive conditions that often hamper the adoption of most techniques of meditation. I have introduced the technique to some of my patients with **anxiety, panic attacks, hypertension and insomnia.** Everyone who has adopted the technique has reported that it helps them relax. So me patients have reported it has helped them *sleep better, and no longer rely on medications.* The most remarkable effect was on a patient with **severe panic attacks**, who could not drive over a bridge without taking an anxiolytic medicine first. She is now able to drive over bridges **without relying on medications!**"

Padma Sripada MD Internal Medicine www.doctorpadma.com

* Visit www.countingbreaths.com for complete information and extensive testimonials.

If you need help, contact: Suryanarayana Chennapragada (Short name – CS) Ph# (W) 518-391-2889. E-mail: csrao1003@gmail.com

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