

How to be Calm and Focused?

Focus on your breathing

Folding finger mode: Fold one finger at a time and breathe three times.

Start with one hand. Fold the little finger. Breathe in. When breathing out, silently say 'one-one-one'. Breathe in second time. When breathing out, silently say 'two-two-two'. Breathe in third time. When breathing out, silently say 'three-three-three'.

Fold the next (ring) finger. Breathe three times as you did at the little finger.

Fold the middle finger. Breathe three times.

Fold the index finger. Breathe three times.

Fold the thumb: Breathe three times.

Now switch to the second hand and repeat what you did with the first hand.

Continue practicing, switching the hands.

Tip mode: Touch the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger. Breathe in and out three times, counting silently, every time you breathe out. During the first out-breath, count 'one-one-one', second out-breath 'two-two-two', third out-breath 'three-three-three'. Repeat the 3 breaths at each of the next 3 finger tips. When you get to the thumb, place the tip of the index finger at the base of the thumb and breathe 3 times.

Now switch to the other hand and repeat the same practice. Continue practicing switching the hands.

Segment mode: Every finger has two cross lines, dividing it into three parts which we call segments. Place the tip of the thumb at the top segment of the little finger. Breathe in and out once. Move the thumb to the middle segment and breathe in and out. Move the thumb to the bottom segment and breathe in and out. Repeat the same steps at the next 3 fingers. At the thumb, place the tip of the index finger on its segments and follow the same steps.

Now switch to the other hand and repeat the same practice. Continue practicing, switching the hands.

Counting mode: While breathing in, feel the coolness inside the nose. While breathing out, silently say 'one-one-one'. Breathe in again. While breathing out, silently say 'two-two-two'. Breathe in again. While breathing out, silently say 'three-three-three'. Continue breathing and counting in sets of three, as you did just now. Every time you realize that you forgot about the counting, get back to the practice by counting from 'one-one-one'.

Feeling mode: Simply feel your breath without using the fingers or counting. While breathing in, feel the slight coolness inside the nose. While breathing out, feel the warm or neutral sensation. Also place a hand on your abdomen. Focus on its expansion while breathing in and contraction while breathing out.

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

911 mode: Breathe in through the nose. Blow out air gently through your mouth, like blowing air through an imaginary straw held between the lips.

When can you use these modes?

One or more modes are suggested for practice in the daily situations described below. Experiment with the other modes also and use any modes that work for you.

Bedtime: When you need to sleep, try the 'folding mode' or 'tip mode'.

On waking up: Continue lying on the bed, eyes closed and practice the 'segment mode'.

Turn right: Breathe till you complete two hands.

Turn left: Breathe till you complete two hands.

Lie on your back: Breathe till you complete two hands.

Push the pillow aside. Lie on your chest. Bend your hands and legs into a comfortable position.

Breathe till you complete two hands. Then get off the bed.

To improve concentration and focus in the class, home or playing games: Practice any mode of your choice.

Waiting: Practice any of the modes when you wait for breakfast, lunch or dinner, computer screen to load, at the doctor's office or stand in a line.

Traveling by Bus/ Car/ Train/ Plane: Practice any mode periodically. You won't get bored.

When you feel anxious, mad, scared, tired, hurt, overwhelmed or stressed: Practice the 911 mode and alternate with any other mode, till you feel better.

Dentist's office: When feeling anxious before seeing the dentist, or when the dentist is working on your teeth, practice the 'folding mode'.

Walking: Combine the walking with the 'counting mode'. While breathing in, feel the coolness inside nose and count silently while breathing out. Every time a foot touches the ground, silently repeat the number being counted till the out-breath ends. During the first out-breath, say 'one-one-one'. Next one 'two-two-two'. Next one 'three-three-three'. Then restart counting from 'one-one-one'.

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

Suryanarayana Chennapragada (Short name – CS) trains adults and children in simple and practical mindbody techniques for Relaxation, Stress management and Meditation. Convenient times and affordable charges.

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