

4-5-6 Breathing Technique

Deep breathing exercises serve as a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system and it can lower blood pressure, calm a racing heart and help the digestive system. It's extremely helpful in alleviating stress! It also positively affects our emotional state and mood. It's not just useful for calming nerves but, keep in mind, oxygen is a catalyst for fat burning so you'll be enhancing your metabolic rate as well. All systems and cells require oxygen to function properly; the more oxygen you deliver to the cells and more toxins such as carbon dioxide you expel – the healthier you'll be.

This breathing technique is simple – everyone can do it – no equipment is needed – it takes very little time – it can be done anywhere, in any position – and ***especially we should do it when facing a tense situation, if stress is pushing us to impulsively reach for food or even if we're having trouble falling asleep.*** Remember a few key points: breathing should be slow and deep and pay extra attention to the exhalation. You can eventually close your eyes as well. Place your tongue at the top of your teeth, next to the gum line during the inhalation. Inhale deeply through the nose (mouth closed) for a count of 4 allowing the abdomen to expand. Hold your breath for a count of 5. Then exhale slowly and deeply through your mouth placing your tongue at the bottom of your teeth for a count of 6. Make the exhalation longer than the inhalation to receive maximum benefit. Think about breathing out every vestige of air in your lungs, pressing down on your ribcage as you exhale. You'll be developing the intercostal muscles in-between your ribcage as you exhale. Repeat this cycle about 4-5 times.

As you develop this breathing technique, don't allow other people to minimize or downplay your positive approach to controlling the stress in your life. If you find that happening to you, suggest they do the same. I'm sure they could use it too! But, you may want to find an isolated area to perform your breathing. Perhaps go to another room away from people or even if you have to hide in the bathroom to do it. This way you're not self-conscious and you can perform it properly to your benefit. I personally do it in the car quite often when I'm rushing here or there to calm myself down.

In the beginning, if you become a little light-headed, simply reduce the frequency (in other words, take a few normal breaths in-between) and work up to a comfortable level. Do not repeat the breaths too fast. Take your time. Check your breathing form as well, for light-headedness is usually the result of chest or shallow breathing. Rather concentrate on abdominal breathing using total lung capacity. It takes a little practice, but in no time you'll be able to master this simple technique. To reap the many benefits, try to engage in this breathing exercise 2-3 times a day, not just when you're feeling stressed.

Stay safe & 4-5-6 BREATHE!
Bessie :)

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