

Breathing Exercises

This document outlines different types of breathing techniques to help you and your team practice more mindfulness. Regular breathing exercises can lead to better mental health and positive emotions, and alleviate stress and depression. It can also help you and your team think more clearly and reduce feelings of anxiety.

How to use this document: Each breathing exercise takes no more than 5 minutes and can be used at the beginning or end of a work day. It includes information on each breathing exercise and what it is best used for.

If you have any questions regarding this document, please reach out to members@starlingminds.com.

Box Breathing

What: Box breathing is a simple but powerful relaxation technique. Athletes, healthcare workers, and Navy SEALs, and police officers use this technique to meditate and lower their stress.

Best for: The exercise aims to return your breathing pattern to a relaxed rhythm to clear and calm your mind improving your focus.

How to do Box Breathing

Step 1: Breathe in counting to four slowly. Feel the air enter your lungs.

Step 2: Hold your breath for 4 seconds. Try to avoid inhaling or exhaling for 4 seconds.

Step 3: Slowly exhale through your mouth for 4 seconds.

Step 4: Repeat steps 1 to 3 until you feel re-centered.

Tip: Try this Box Breathing exercise guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Diaphragmatic Breathing

What: Diaphragmatic breathing is a breathing exercise that helps strengthen your diaphragm, an important and most efficient muscle that enables you to breathe better and more deeply.

Best for: The exercise aims to strengthen your capacity to breathe and bring more balance and relaxation into your life.

How to do Diaphragmatic breathing

Step 1: Breathe slowly through the nose

Step 2: Pause between the inhale and exhalation

Step 3: Release the air slowly through pursed lips

Tip: Try our Diaphragmatic exercise guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Single Nostril Breathing

What: Single nostril breathing can bring better balance to your mind and body. It's a widely regarded yoga breathing technique to help reduce anxiety and enhance meditation.

Best for: The exercise activates your parasympathetic (rest-and-digest) nervous system to help you relax, calm down and feel more at peace.

How to do Single Nostril Breathing

Step 1: Sit comfortably with a straight spine

Step 2: Block your right nostril and inhale through the left nostril + a gentle breath retention

Step 3: Block your left nostril and exhale through the right nostril + gentle breath retention

Tip: Try our Single Nostril Breathing guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Alternate Nostril Breathing

What: Alternate Nostril Breathing is a simple and powerful way to settle your mind, body, and emotions. Research has shown that practicing this technique for 10 minutes brings the most benefits to you.

Best for: The exercise helps restore balance in your left and right sides of your brain, ease your mind, and refocuses you.

How to do Alternate Nostril Breathing

Step 1: Sit comfortably with a straight spine

Step 2: Inhale through the left nostril and then close the nostril

Step 3: Open the right nostril and exhale through this side

Step 4: Inhale through the right nostril and then close the nostril

Step 5: Open the left nostril and exhale through the left side

Tip: Try our Alternate Nostril Breathing guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Fire Breathing

What: Breath of Fire involves passive, normal inhalations and powerful, rapid exhalations. This style of breathing may help reduce stress, boost brain function, improve respiratory health and digestion, and strengthen the abdominal muscles.

Best for: The exercise helps correct low blood circulation in the body, strengthens your lungs, and increases your energy and focus.

How to do Fire Breathing

Step 1: Sit comfortably with a straight spine

Step 2: Contract your lower belly as you exhale

Step 3: Release the contraction and inhale naturally

Step 4: Repeat the exercise slowly for around 8 to 10 rounds

Step 5: Slowly release your breath and come back to normal breathing

Tip: Try our Fire Breathing guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Right Nostril Breathing

What: Right Nostril Breathing is a technique for people who need more energy, clarity and focus.

Best for: The exercise is effective for low energy, stress management, and anxiety.

How to do Right Nostril Breathing

Step 1: Sit comfortably with a straight spine

Step 2: Inhale through the right nostril

Step 3: Gently hold your breath in for a moment

Step 4: Exhale through the left nostril

Step 5: And repeat by inhaling through the right nostril again

Tip: Try our Right Nostril Breathing guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Double Breathing

What: The Double Breathing technique activates the breath in short bursts. It's these active movements that excite the sympathetic nervous system and make you more alert.

Best for: The exercise sharpens your mind, increases your energy, and great to practice in the morning if you are feeling sluggish or low in energy.

How to do Double Breathing

Step 1: Inhale through the nose with a short, sharp inhalation followed directly by a long and strong inhalation

Step 2: Then without pausing, exhale through the nose and mouth with a short, then long exhale

Step 3: Repeat 5 times then pause for a short break before beginning your next round

Step 4: Get ready to feel super amped!

Tip: Try our Double Breathing guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Ocean Breathing

What: Ocean breathing is a practice that is used in meditation and yoga as a way to unify the mind and the body.

Best for: The exercise helps calm the mind and body and brings on many benefits: stronger lungs with an increased capacity, healthier heart and strong diaphragm. It can even help with asthma.

How to do Ocean Breathing

Step 1: Inhale and exhale through the nose whilst constricting your throat. Keep your mouth closed

Step 2: Constrict your throat to the point that your breathing makes a rushing noise, almost like snoring

Step 3: Control your breath with your diaphragm

Step 4: Keep your inhalations and exhalations equal in duration

Tip: Try our Ocean Breathing guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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Three-Part Breathing

What: Three-part breathing exercise works in three ways: calming your mind, soothing your nervous system, and improving your awareness of your lung capacity.

Best for: The exercise relaxes and grounds you to the present moment and calms your mind. It teaches you to breathe more fully and completely.

How to do Three-Part Breathing

Step 1: Inhale through the nose ($\frac{1}{3}$ of your breath), allowing your belly to expand softly

Step 2: Inhale through your lower chest ($\frac{1}{3}$ of your breath), allowing your lower chest to expand

Step 3: Inhale through your upper chest ($\frac{1}{3}$ of your breath) allowing your upper chest to expand Exhale all the air out from your nose, taking your belly button closer to your spine

Tip: Try our Three-Part Breathing guided by Mental Fitness Coach, Tara Achkar, featured in the Starling video section.

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More Breathing Exercises

For more breathing exercises, be sure to check out Wellness Wednesday.

Bi-weekly on Wednesdays: 4.30 pm PT | 6.30 pm CT | 7.30 pm ET

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