

Breathe a little easier

Helpful tips to lower anxiety

Stress is a normal part of life. Long-term stress, however, can lessen the ability to think clearly and respond well to disappointments and challenges. This can impact your work, relationships, and mental health.

Breathwork can be a powerful tool to deal with chronic stress. Deep breathing calms the mind and restores the heart rate to a normal level. It can also lessen anxiety and improve sleep.

What are some breathwork techniques to reduce stress?

- **Box breathing.** Count to four on each inhale, hold your breath for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, and wait for four seconds before beginning again. Repeat the cycle until you feel calmer.
- **Relaxing breath.** Inhale through the nose for four seconds. Hold your breath for seven seconds, then exhale slowly through the mouth for eight seconds. Repeat.
- **Coherent breathing.** Inhale for four seconds then exhale for four seconds. Do this for one minute. On the next cycle, extend breaths to five seconds. Increase the inhale and exhale time by one second each cycle. Work your way up to ten seconds if possible.
- **Belly breathing.** Inhale through the nose until you feel it in your belly. Exhale through the mouth completely as your belly falls. Repeat 15 to 20 times or as needed.
- **Alternate nostril breathing.** Gently close your right nostril with your right thumb. Inhale slowly through your left nostril. Pause and then repeat with the other nostril.

For more ways to cope with stress and anxiety, Carelon Wellbeing can help. Use your benefits to access 3 counseling sessions to help you with stress and anxiety.



We're here to help

Your benefits, including confidential counseling sessions and extensive well-being resources, are available 24/7 at no extra cost to you.

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