

# 4 -7- 8 Breathing Exercise

This is a very simple and useful tool to achieve general relaxation, to ease pain, stress, and anxiety, and even to induce sleep. The more you use it the greater the results you will get.

## Beginner Tips:

- Ideally, sit with your back straight, or lie on your back.
- Know that you can't really mess this up.
- Trust the process.
- Repeat often.

## Anyone can do it...

- Simple
- Quick
- No equipment needed
- You can do it anywhere

## STEPS

- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 7.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, with pursed lips, to a count of 8.
- This is one breath. Now inhale thru the nose again and repeat for a total of 3 - 5 breaths.
- Continue until you feel more ease or until you fall asleep. You can build the number of cycles over time.

## Are the numbers important?

The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of **4:7:8** is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed your counting up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

## Why should I do it?

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Unlike tranquilizing drugs, which are often effective when you first take them but then lose their power over time, this exercise is subtle when you first try it but **gains in power with repetition and practice**. Use this new skill whenever anything upsetting happens - before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep.

## How often?

Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently. You might begin with four breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to eight, ten, or unlimited breaths. If you feel a little lightheaded when you first breathe this way, do not be concerned - it will pass.

