



Breathing Space Challenge

Practice short breathing exercises a few times daily to relieve stress and refocus yourself

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to the “Breathing Space Challenge,” a journey designed to enhance your mental and physical well-being through the simple, yet powerful practice of breathing. Over the next week, you’ll begin on a path to greater relaxation and health by incorporating short breathing exercises into your daily routine.

WHAT IS CONSCIOUS BREATHING?

While breathing is an automatic part of your daily life, conscious breathing can be a cornerstone of mental health. By focusing on your breath, you can **anchor yourself in the present moment**, reduce stress, and promote a sense of inner calm. Studies have shown that regular breathing exercises can:

1. **Stress Reduction:** Conscious breathing activates the body’s relaxation response, reducing the production of stress hormones **like cortisol**.
2. **Improved Focus:** Practicing breathing techniques enhance focus and concentration by calming the mind and reducing distracting thoughts.
3. **Enhanced Emotional Regulation:** Breathing exercises can help manage and lower strong emotions like anger and anxiety, promoting better emotional control.
4. **Better Sleep:** Practicing deep, rhythmic breathing before bedtime can relax the body and mind, leading to **improved sleep quality**.
5. **Enhanced Immune Function:** Regular deep breathing helps fully oxygenate the body and remove toxins, promoting overall well-being.

THE CHALLENGE

To complete this challenge, each day you will be trying a new breathing technique. The goal is to complete it three times per day. At the end of the week, you will hopefully have gained a new habit for centering and focusing yourself during moments of stress, but also a library of different techniques on hand to use when you need them. Try to note how you are feeling after each exercise and see which ones work best for you.

BREATHING SPACE

1



The 4-7-8 Technique: Inhale quietly through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, and exhale forcefully through your mouth for 8 seconds. This exercise promotes relaxation and helps to calm the nervous system.

2



Diaphragmatic Breathing: Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose, ensuring your diaphragm inflates enough to stretch your lungs. Exhale slowly and repeat. This technique is great for stress reduction.

3



Box Breathing: Imagine a box as you breathe. Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, and hold again for 4 seconds. This exercise is used by athletes and military personnel to focus and regain composure.

4



Alternate Nostril Breathing: Close your right nostril with your thumb and inhale through your left nostril. Then, close your left nostril with your fingers and exhale through your right nostril. Continue this pattern for several minutes. This helps to balance the body and calm the mind.

5



Guided Imagery Breathing: Close your eyes and visualize a setting or place that makes you feel calm and happy. As you breathe deeply, picture your stress leaving your body with each exhale and imagine positive energy entering with each inhale. This exercise aids in reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of well-being.

6



Pursed Lips Breathing: Begin by relaxing your neck and shoulders. Inhale slowly through your nostrils for two counts, keeping your mouth closed. Purse your lips as if you're about to whistle, and exhale gently for four counts. This technique can help you breathe more slowly and deeply, reducing the work of breathing and keeping airways open longer.

7



Five Finger Breathing: Hold one hand in front of you and trace the outline of your hand with the index finger of your other hand. Starting at the base of your thumb, inhale slowly until you reach the tip of your thumb. Pause, then exhale as you trace down the other side of your thumb. Repeat this breathing pattern for each finger.

CHALLENGE COMPLETE!

At the end of the week take a moment to reflect. Which of the breathing exercises worked best for you? Incorporating these exercises into your daily routine will help you cultivate a deeper sense of calm and focus. Remember, the key to feeling the full benefits of the "Breathing Space Challenge" is consistency. Dedicate a few minutes each day to these practices, and you'll likely notice a positive impact on your mental clarity and physical relaxation.



Congratulations on completing the **Breathing Space** Challenge

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.

