

AAA BREATHING EXERCISE

Abolish Anxiety Anytime



ROBERTRUDELIC

A photograph of two women sitting in a meditative pose on a wooden deck outdoors. The woman in the foreground is wearing a light blue tank top and has her hair in a bun with a dark flower. The woman behind her is wearing a red tank top and has her hair in a ponytail. They are both looking forward with closed eyes, appearing calm and focused. The background is a soft-focus green landscape.

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Abolish Anxiety Anytime
Take a breather from anxiety anywhere anytime.

Introduction –

Using breathing techniques to alter or affect the physical and mental and emotional have been around for thousands of years. In many traditions it has played a role in improving or regaining health. I've been using various types of breath work for the past 25 years for various reasons, both personally and in my practice, whether to improve my athletic performance, calm my mind before sleep or to focus and concentrate better. They have a profound effect on your body and mind and give you a distinct advantage in life.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older, or 18% of the population. Americans suffer more than any other country in the world and it is one of the biggest money making categories for the pharmaceutical industry. As Dr. Amen from The Amen Clinic says: "Anxiety and depression are different sides of the same coin". This makes it an even bigger problem for all of us. The good news is there are ways you can address anxiety before taking the poison pills with all of their side effects.

Breathing and exercise is a great place to start and they have no side effects. Dr. Amen has said that anything you can do to address anxiety will lessen the chances and or the amount of drugs you may be prescribed if a more invasive approach is needed.

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This breathing exercise is a combination of techniques from the Chinese and Ayurveda traditions. There is a lot written on breathing and as with all new methods I encourage you to read up on them. Knowledge increases your belief which increases their effectiveness. I use the full breath. Start with filling the belly with air first then bringing it into the chest and finishing with it under the chin. I pause for a moment then purse my lips tightly to greatly slow the release of the air and blow out until I'm completely out of air. This is where the magic happens.

At the end of the breath the body/mind automatically wants to get air into the lungs. Any lag time causes the fight or flight mechanism to trigger and we start to panic (think of being out of breath in the water). It's at this moment we have the opportunity to train the panic/anxiety trigger to respond with less intensity and therefore we gain control of our anxiety. When you control the breath you realize you don't need to panic and you can shift from panic to calm in a split second. Repeated practice gives you confidence in your ability to calm yourself down in stressful moments.

This is how it's done –

- 1) Place the tip of your tongue in the roof of your mouth and inhale through your nose into your belly (do not move your chest).
- 2) After you have filled the belly let the chest expand until you feel the breath up under your chin and pause for 1-2 seconds (physically relax).
- 3) Release your tongue, purse your lips tightly (make an O shape) and exhale. The breath should feel like you have to gently force it past your lips (15 seconds is average release time).
- 4) At the end of the exhale, force out the last bit of breath and pause!

Tip – It's here you need to focus and relax your whole body. Before starting the next inhale, place the tip of the tongue in the roof of the mouth again then start to inhale into your belly SLOWLY!!! Finish the full inhale and repeat the exhale. The key to reprogramming the anxiety reflex is to calmly transition from the exhale to the inhale and not rush it. It takes practice for many at first. Westerners are primarily chest breathers so the whole exercise will be challenging at first. Practice without judgment and make it a game to see how long you can make your exhale and how long you can hold your breath and still control the start of the inhale.

Example ...

I have a client who is a total Type A personality and tends to be a bit obsessive. He really felt how out of control he was when it came to calming himself down when he first tried this exercise. In a few short days he started to gain some control of the exercise. At first for just a second, then longer and soon he could comfortably hold his breath for 2 seconds at the top and bottom of his 15-20 second breaths. His demeanor was calmer and he said he could concentrate and focus longer during the day. Another client who had difficulty falling asleep used it to quiet her mind. Within a week of doing the exercise she was able to fall asleep easier and her overall sleeping habits improved. This is a highly functional tool to quickly calm you down and get mentally composed without anyone even knowing. It can be done anywhere, anytime and can be used when tapping may be a little too obvious or out of place.

Practice! Practice! Practice!

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