



7:11 Breathing Exercise

This is a breathing exercise that allows the body to calm down, relieve stress and reduces anxiety.

Try doing this when lying down before sleep and on waking. You can also do this at any time, such as driving, or waiting in a queue, without anyone being aware of what you are doing.

The ratio of breathing out being four counts longer than you breathe in is the most important aspect of this, and since everyone's breathing and counting speeds are different, you may be more comfortable with a ratio of 6 to 10 or 3 to 7, etc.

METHOD

1. If lying down, place your hands on your stomach and breathe in through the nose, feeling your stomach rise under your hands. (It is not necessary to place your hands on the stomach, this is only to ensure that you are breathing correctly. Once you are happy that you are breathing deeply through your abdomen, then this step is not needed)
2. Breathe in for a count of 7, and then, without holding the breath, breathe out for a count of 11 (or whatever your comfortable ratio is).
3. Repeat this for 5-10 minutes, being mindful of the numbers as you count and being aware of the breath as it enters and leaves your body, rather than letting your thoughts wander. If you find your thoughts have strayed, then simply bring them back to the counting and breathing and carry on.

Alternative: You can also breathe in as above, and then push the breath out through compressed lips, which is a natural action we tend to do when stressed.

If you are feeling very distressed or tearful, you may find it difficult to regulate your breathing as above. In this instance, breathe in very sharply through the nose and then breathe out slowly. Repeat this a few times, and then when you are a little calmer, begin to do the breathing as above.

Done regularly, this exercise will vastly reduce anxiety, and works best when made part of your everyday routine. Like anything, the more we practice it the better we get at doing it, and the more effective it is!