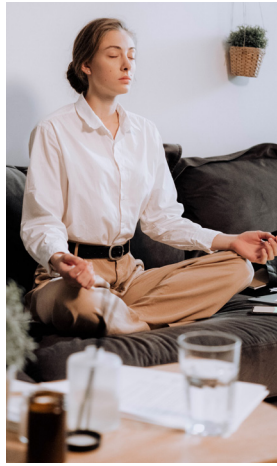


Do You Take Time to Breathe?

Most people don't, says Stanford University researcher Dr. Emma Seppälä. She's the author of the book, *The Happiness Track*, a frequent TED Talks speaker, and director of Stanford's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. And she helps people learn to use breathing to reduce stress, improve health, and increase happiness.

TIP: When you're stressed out, and you've got a million things to do at home or at work, it's easy to think you don't have time for mindful breathing. But before you rush off to the next thing on your to-do list, give it a try.

"Breathing is the single most important act that we do every day," says Seppälä. "Daily breathing practices activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is associated with resting and digesting, and a more peaceful mind and body."



7 Steps to Healthy Breathing

Want to learn how to breathe to improve your health? Here's one easy-to-follow breathing practice you can use. Follow these seven steps:

- 1 Create a breathing practice.** Set aside 10 to 15 minutes each day to breathe. Schedule it just like you would an important meeting.
- 2 Find a quiet place** where you won't be disturbed. Close your office or bedroom door. Go to your car. Sit on a bench in a quiet area of a park.
- 3 Set a timer.** Start with 10 minutes. As you get comfortable with breathing, increase the time to 15 or 20 minutes.
- 4 Sit comfortably,** and place one hand on your stomach.
- 5 Breathe in through your nose.** Inhale deeply and slowly. Pay attention to your chest rising as your lungs fill with air. Focus on your breathing, and try not to think about anything else.
- 6 Exhale through your mouth.** Tighten your stomach muscles, and try to push out as much air as possible.
- 7 Repeat the process** until time's up.

This is just one example of a breathing exercise you can use to reduce stress and feel better. But it's not the only way to use breathing to improve your health.

It's a way to help you get started, create a daily breathing practice, and be more mindful about your health, happiness, and lifestyle choices.

Want to be healthier and happier? Stop what you're doing, and take a few minutes to breathe.

Infographic:
The Scientific
Benefits of
Breathing
<https://tinyurl.com/y9aiklv>

11 Health Benefits From Taking a Break to Breathe



If you think taking a time out to breathe sounds a little woo-woo, you're not alone. When you're stressed out, rushing from thing to thing, maybe sleep deprived, too, it's easy to dismiss.

Maybe you're even thinking: "Who's got time for that? I'm breathing just fine."

But why not give it a try? Take a few minutes to breathe, and you might be surprised by how you feel. Research shows breathing can help:

1. Lower cortisol levels linked to stress, inflammation and chronic disease¹
2. Control blood pressure²
3. Reduce cravings
4. Increase productivity
5. Treat depression and anxiety³
6. Improve mood
7. Increase energy and happiness
8. Control impulsive behavior
9. Improve quality of sleep⁴
10. Strengthen the immune system⁵
11. Improve brain function, thinking and problem solving⁶

Video: Calm during COVID: Mindful Breathing
<https://tinyurl.com/euxkd925>

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