

The 4-7-8 Breath

Performance Learning PLUS #21

This technique is particularly useful for calming your body, mind, and emotions. While chest breathing is associated with anxiety, abdominal breathing (such as the 4-7-8 breath) is associated with relaxation.

Directions:

- Sit or lie down with your spine comfortably straight.
- Breathe in through your nose and down into your belly. Breathe in slowly, fully, and comfortably to the count of 4.
- Hold your breath for the count of 7.
- Then exhale through your mouth to the count of 8. (The exhale count is longer to encourage you to squeeze all the air out of your lungs.)
- At the end of your out-breath, push your stomach muscles back toward your spine and up, to completely empty your lungs of air. (This will also help to ensure a full in-breath.)
- Repeat this 4-7-8 process four or five times in the morning before beginning your day and four or five times at night before going to sleep.

Variations:

- You can use the 4-7-8 Breath to help you gain focus before meditating.
- During times of high stress or anxiety, feel free to use this technique for longer than four or five cycles. Use it until you feel the release you are seeking.

Source: The above is a sample page from the PLS online resource, *Stress Reduction and Personal Renewal*.
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