

# Self-Care and Anxiety Relief Tools

## Breathing Exercises

### ABDOMINAL BREATHING

Lie down on the floor. Place your hands over your belly. For a count of 3, breathe into your expanding belly. Hold your breath for one count. Slowly breathe out for a count of 3.

This breathing exercise will help you to relax and slow down your mind.

### UJJAYI BREATHING

In an upright position, inhale through your nose for a count of 3 and exhale making “ahh” sound with your mouth for a count of 3. Do this for 2 minutes.

This breathing technique will aid you in soothing your nervous system by increasing dopamine and oxytocin, the feel-good hormones.

### ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

Close your right nostril with your right thumb. Inhale deeply for a count of 3 through your left nostril. Then close your left nostril with the ring finger of your right hand as you release the right nostril, exhaling for a count of 3. Keeping the left nostril closed, inhale deeply through your right nostril for a count of 3. Seal your right nostril again with your thumb, then release and exhale through your left nostril.

Balance your inhalations and exhalations so they are the same length through both nostrils. Repeat up to 10 full cycles.

The chief benefit of Alternate Nostril Breathing is deep relaxation, which lowers your heart rate and helps to relieve mental tension.

## Meditation Exercises

### ANAPANA MEDITATION

Anapana meditation is similar to breathing exercises, but instead of controlling the breath you focus your attention on it.

Start by sitting upright in cross-legged position or in a chair, with eyes closed, focusing your attention on the area at the ring of your nostrils above the upper lip. Observe your breath without controlling it.

If thoughts come—let them. Gently bring your attention back to the breath.

Start with 5-10 minutes and try to work up to 30. Keep at it in a gentle and positive way.

### CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

This meditation works well for visually-oriented individuals.

Try sitting still for at least 5 minutes to start. Visualize a beautiful place like a beach or mountains. Try to be as specific as you can with what you see and where you are.

Notice the feelings that are likely to come up such as calmness, peace and gratitude.

Reflect that you are the one generating these feelings through your own imagination and creativity!

## Other tools

### AFFIRMATIONS

Sit still and upright and for at least 5 minutes to start, working toward 15-30 minutes. Repeat a mantra. This can be a spiritual phrase or a positive statement like “May I be healthy, happy and safe”.

Or, say to yourself “LET” on inhale, and “GO” on exhale. This technique combines breathing and affirmations, which can be especially potent.

### YOGA PRACTICE

Yoga can be very helpful in stress reduction and self-care.

You can find a class that suits your needs at [www.YogaClassNearYou.com](http://www.YogaClassNearYou.com).



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[www.ManhattanMFT.com](http://www.ManhattanMFT.com)  
[info@ManhattanMFT.com](mailto:info@ManhattanMFT.com)  
917-510-6422

6 east 39th street, suite 503  
New York, NY 10016