

# Relaxation & Slow Breathing Exercise

You can do this exercise before tackling a difficult situation, or at times you feel tense or anxious.

1. Breathe in slowly through your nose; try to spread breathing in over 3 seconds.
2. Hold your breath for 6 seconds (don't take a deep breath).
3. When you get to 6 seconds, breathe out through your mouth. You might want to say a word that brings comfort to you whilst breathing out. Try to spread breathing out over 3 seconds.
4. Breathe in and out slowly in a 6 second cycle. Breathe in for 3 seconds and out for 3 seconds. This will produce a breathing rate of 10 breaths per minute.
5. At the end of each minute (after 10 breaths) hold your breath again for 6 seconds and then continue breathing in the 6 second cycle.
6. Continue breathing in this way until you feel calmer.

If you find it hard to do this exercise in an anxiety-provoking situation, consider the possibility of taking "time out" to calm yourself. For example, at a party slip out to a quiet spot for a short time and do your breathing.

The more you practice this slow-breathing exercise, the better you will become at using it. If you do these things as soon as you notice the first signs of discomfort (over breathing, anxiety or panic) the symptoms can subside within a few minutes.