Box Breathing: A Gentle Guide

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What is box breathing?

Box breathing is a paced breathing exercise using four equal stages. Some people find a gentle rhythm useful when feeling stressed. It is optional, and you can stop at any time.

Try the four steps

1. Breathe in gently through your nose for a count of four.

2. If comfortable, pause for a count of four.

3. Breathe out gently for a count of four.

4. If comfortable, pause again for a count of four. Repeat for a few cycles, without forcing your breath.

Make it your own

If holding your breath is uncomfortable, skip the pauses and breathe slowly in and out instead. Shorter counts are fine. You do not need to breathe deeply or push through dizziness.

Look around the room and notice your feet on the floor when you finish.

When to avoid it

If you experience dizziness, breathlessness or distress, return to your usual breathing. Seek medical advice if breathing exercises are unsuitable for you.

This resource is for general wellbeing and education, not a substitute for professional or emergency care. Stop any exercise that makes you feel unwell.