

Mindfulness & Breathwork

'You cannot suffer the past and future because they do not exist. What you are suffering is your memory and your imagination'. Sadhguru

Mindfulness practices can help us to reduce stress and anxiety, manage our emotions, and help us pay attention to the present.

Mindfulness is the practice of fully engaging in the current moment, rather than in the past or future. What you pay attention to may be a thought, a feeling, a physical sensation, another person or things that are happening around you at that particular moment. This skill can help you to handle life pressures such as school work, exam preparation, social expectations and relationships.

We all have the capacity to be mindful and when you practice mindfulness you are strengthening your ability to pay attention. The practise of mindfulness helps us to feel calm and boosts our mental clarity.

Meditation

Meditation is a way to get quiet, calm, and focused. It trains your mind to slow down, relax, and stay positive. Meditating for just a few minutes a day can help you feel centered, balanced, and more in control and it can help you feel more grounded when it seems like you're being pulled in a million directions.

Try this meditation for 3-5 minutes

- Close your door and find a comfortable place to sit.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breathing.
- As you inhale, think about your lungs inflating, your ribs expanding, and the breath moving through your nose.
- As you exhale, think about your lungs deflating and the breath rushing out of your nose. .
- If your mind starts to wander, calmly say to yourself "thinking" and then turn your attention back to your breath.

Breathing

It may seem strange to practice breathing, since we do it naturally every moment of our lives. But when people get stressed, their breathing often becomes shallower and more rapid. Simply paying attention to how you are breathing can help you notice how you're feeling.

So start by noticing how you're breathing, then focus on slowing down and breathing more deeply. Slow, calm, deep breathing can help us relax, manage stress, relieve

anxiety and depression, and get a good night's sleep. Breathing also helps quiet the mind.

Try practicing these breathing exercises:

Belly Breathing

Belly breathing allows you to focus on filling your lungs fully. It's a great way to counteract shallow, stressed-out breathing:

- Sit in a comfortable position with one hand on your belly.
- With your mouth closed and your jaw relaxed, inhale through your nose. As you inhale, allow your belly to expand. Imagine the lower part of your lungs filling up first, then the rest of your lungs inflating.
- As you slowly exhale, imagine the air emptying from your lungs, and allow the belly to flatten.
- Do this 3-5 times.

This kind of breathing can help settle your nerves before a big test, sports game, or even before bed.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

This breath technique can help you feel more balanced and calm:

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Place the thumb of your right hand on your right nostril. Tuck your first and middle fingers down and out of the way.
- As your right thumb gently closes your right nostril, slowly exhale through your left nostril, as you count to 3 or 4.
- Now, keeping your right thumb on the right nostril, slowly inhale through the left nostril, as you count to 3 or 4.
- Lift your thumb, use your ring finger to close your left nostril, and exhale through your right nostril for 5 counts. Then inhale through your right nostril as you slowly count to 3 or 4.
- Change back to putting your thumb over your right nostril. Lift your ring finger from your left nostril, and repeat the whole process — exhaling through your left nostril for 3-4 counts, then inhaling through the left nostril for 3-4 counts.
- Continue this pattern (exhale, inhale, change sides) for three more cycles.

These breathing and meditation techniques can have subtle but powerful effects. If you can practise them regularly the benefits will show up in daily life.