

# HOW BREATHING REDUCES ANXIETY

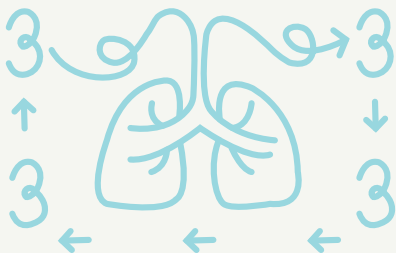
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## When we're anxious, the brain's primitive "fight or flight" system

- sends the heart and lungs into overdrive
- to deliver heavily oxygenated blood to our large muscles
- in case we need to attack or run

## If anxiety becomes too intense, controlled breathing can help because

- nerves on the surface of the lungs communicate with the brain
- breathing deeply and slowly tells these nerves that all is well
- the nerves send this reassuring message to the brain
- which quiets the anxiety alarm



## Try *square breathing*

- inhale slowly for a count of three
- hold your breath for a count of three
- exhale slowly for a count of three
- wait for a count of three, then begin the cycle again

**If you feel anxious often or your anxiety becomes very intense very quickly, use calm moments to practice square breathing. A little practice will make it easier to slip into square breathing when your anxiety starts to ramp up.**