

# Coping & Wellness: Calming Breaths



*The Mecca of Black Wellness*



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Did you know that when you're experiencing significant emotional/physical stress or tension that it can also have an impact on your breathing? During times of stress, individuals are more likely to take short and quicker shallow breaths, compared to slow and longer deeper breaths when in a more relaxed state. That is because there is a physiological connection between the effect of stress and anxiety on your breathing and how you manage stress and tension in your body.

As such, learning to control and to calm your breathing is a powerful tool in reinforcing relaxation and reducing your levels of stress. Breathing exercises allow you to center and quiet your thoughts, focus on your breaths and to be in the present moment. Breathing exercises are a quick and easy strategy that you can implement anywhere and at any time to reduce your stress and to increase your feeling of relaxation and calm.

## **Time to Practice a Calm Breathing Strategy:**

1. Find a quiet place to sit.
2. Take a few minutes to sit comfortably in a chair in an upright position, and allow your feet to firmly touch the ground, with your hands in your lap.
3. **Inhale:** Take a deep breath in while counting to 3.
4. **Hold:** Hold the breath in for 4 seconds.
5. **Exhale:** Let out a deep slow breath through your mouth, counting to 5.
6. **Repeat:** The cycle 4 times.

What did you notice at the end of the 4 calm breathing cycles? Are you more relaxed? You can practice this breathing exercise over the next week and take notice of any changes that you notice. Whenever you are experiencing stress or tension, take notice of your breathing and try this strategy. Other suggestions for implementing controlled breathing exercises include yoga, exercise, or meditation.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.BlackMentalWellness.com](http://www.BlackMentalWellness.com)



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### Resources During Crisis or Distress

#### The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit, <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> or dial 1-888-628-9454 to speak to someone.

#### Psychology Today

[www.PsychologyToday.com](http://www.PsychologyToday.com)

Psychology Today's Therapy Directory lists clinical professionals, psychiatrists and treatment centers who provide mental health services in the US and internationally.

#### Therapy for Black Girls

[www.TherapyForBlackGirls.com](http://www.TherapyForBlackGirls.com)

Therapy for Black Girls is an online space dedicated to encouraging the mental wellness of Black women and girls.

#### Zoc Doc

[www.ZocDoc.com](http://www.ZocDoc.com)

With Zocdoc, you can see doctors' open appointment times and book instantly online, make informed choices with verified reviews, and stay on top of important checkups with tailored reminders.

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