



Healthy Practices | Week 1: Body

Breathing Exercise

God gave us the gift of breath.

The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. -Genesis 2:7

Clinical studies show employing controlled breathing strategies can help our bodies manage anxiety, stress, aid us in regulating our emotions, and can even assist us with our experiences of physical pain.

4-7-8 Breathing Exercise:

- If you are new to this exercise, it will help if you begin sitting in an upright, comfortable position.
- Slowly inhale through your nose, counting to 4 as you go.
- Hold your breath for 7 seconds.
- Slowly exhale through your mouth, counting to 8.
- Repeat for 1-3 minutes (or longer, if you'd like), until you feel your body relax.

A helpful tip for your inhale/exhale rhythm:

To help you remember to inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, imagine you are holding a cup of your favorite hot beverage (coffee, tea, hot chocolate, etc.) and you are inhaling the aroma and exhaling to blow the beverage to cool it down.

Pray:

After engaging in this exercise, pray. Thank God for the gift of breath. Thank God for creating oxygen to nourish your body. Thank God that your body is so wonderfully made that you have a built-in relaxation tool in your lungs.

Adding this practice to your life:

If possible, engage with this exercise at least a few times a week, practicing it as you would a fire drill. When you begin to feel stressed or anxious, you will be prepared to employ your 4-7-8 breathing exercise.

Though breathing exercises have existed for centuries, across continents and cultures, the specific breathing technique known as 4-7-8 breathing, was conceived and popularized by Harvard-trained medical doctor and founder of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine Dr. Andrew Weil.

The above exercise includes instructions that are slightly modified for easier engagement.



Healthy Practices to begin the year

Healthy Practices for Children | Week 1: Body

Breathing Exercise

Say this to your child:

The Bible tells us God made our bodies and God gave us the gift of breath.

Can you take a deep breath? And let it out? Good job! Can you do it again and take an even deeper breath this time? Good job! When you feel upset, you can take a deep breath in and out and this can help your body.

Ask your child to repeat these prayers after you:

"Thank you, God, for making air for me to breathe!"

"Thank you, God, for making my body so great!"

Read this verse to your child:

God formed man from dirt on the ground and then God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. -Genesis 2:7

In the box below, draw a picture of what you imagined when you heard that Bible verse: