

# Breathe

Breathing is fundamental; we can go without food or water for a while, but we can only go without breathing for a few minutes. It's also one of the things that is impacted by changes in emotional states. We often notice our breathing or heart rate changes before we even realise we are having an emotional reaction to something - it can be one of our first warning signs! It is also a great skill to master as you don't need any equipment, no-one can tell you are using the strategy and you can practise it anywhere!

Lie down with your back on a flat surface

Put the tips of your middle fingers so they are just touching, with your palms flat against your stomach. The tips of your middle fingers should be sat over your belly button (if you struggle with this, you can lay an item on your stomach, such as your mobile phone)

You are going to take a deep breath in through your nose

Imagine air going in through your nose, down into your lungs and into your stomach

Imagine your stomach is a balloon and you are inflating it with the air you are breathing in

As you do this, your stomach should 'inflate' and rise and you should see that the tips of your fingers are now not touching (or notice the rise and fall of the item placed on the stomach)

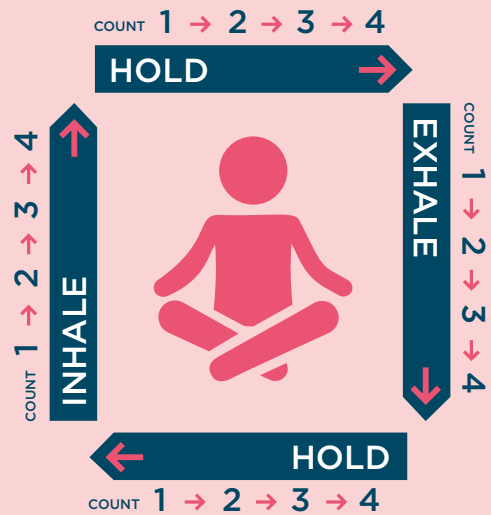
Once you have 'inflated your balloon', breathe out through your mouth

Repeat until you feel calm

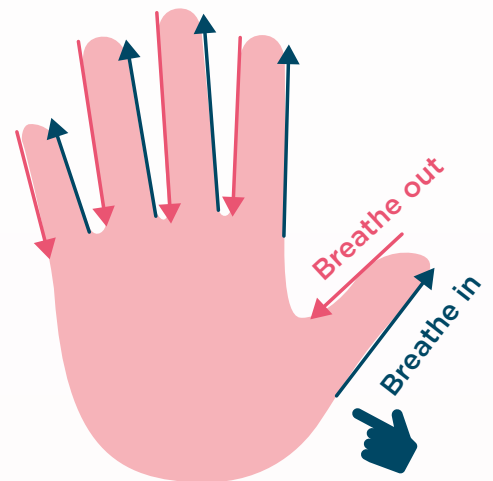
If you notice your attention wander, no problem, just refocus on your breathing

Here are some other breathing techniques you may find useful....

**Square breathing** - imagine you are drawing out a square. You will be holding your breath on the horizontals and breathing out on the verticals. Follow the diagram opposite:



**5 finger breathing** - similar to square breathing above, you follow the shape of your hand, inhaling on the upwards and exhaling on the downwards as you trace your fingers. Follow the diagram opposite:



**PRIORY**

PRIVATE  
HEALTHCARE