

good
vibes
drive

JUNE -
EDITION 4

Mental Health Matters



Here are three very simple and quick mindfulness techniques you can use to help get you get out of worry, away from anxiety and even halt a panic attack in its tracks.

1. Anchoring

One of the best ways to calm yourself down is to anchor yourself by directing your attention into the lower half of your body. Begin by focusing on your feet and how they feel inside your socks or shoes and against the ground. Expand your attention to include the sensations first in your lower legs and then in your upper legs – do they feel heavy or light? Warm or cool? Tingly or numb? Now include the sensations of your breathing, really relaxing as you breathe out.

This is a great way of anchoring yourself and you can do it any time, with your eyes open or closed, while sitting or even while walking around. Anchor yourself. Then breathe.

2. Breath counting

This technique can be used in conjunction with anchoring or on its own. Anchor first. On your next in-breath, count up to 6 as you breathe all the way in, and then on the out-breath, count up to 10 as you breathe all the way out. This technique has the effect of lengthening both the in-breath and the out-breath, slowing down your breathing. It also lengthens the out-breath more than the in-breath, forcing you to release more carbon dioxide, slowing your heart rate, calming you down and restoring emotional equilibrium.

Make sure you fit the numbers to your breath and not the other way around. If 6 and 10 don't work for you, find another ratio that does, as long as the out-breath is at least two counts longer than the in-breath. If it's too hard to continue breathing while counting, count for one full breath, then take one normal breath and count the next one.

If you feel very panicked and can't manage the counting, say "in" to your self as you breath in, and "out" as you breathe out fully, trying to elongate the out-breath. Then again, say "in" on the in breath etc. Keep going for at least one minute but go for as long as you need. I have used this technique very successfully myself to ward off impending panic attacks in the middle of the night.

3. Finger breathing

Finger breathing is another version of breath counting. Hold one hand in front of you, palm facing towards you. With the index finger of your other hand, trace up the outside length of your thumb while you breath in, pausing at the top of your thumb and then trace it down the other side while you breath out. That's one breath. Trace up the side of the next finger while you breathe in, pause at the top, and then trace down the other side of that finger while you breathe out. That's two breaths. Keep going, tracing along each finger as you count each breath. When you get the end of the last finger, come back up that finger and do it in reverse.

This practice gives you something visual to focus on and something kinaesthetic to do with your hands as well as focusing on counting and your breathing. Its very useful when there is a lot going around you and its hard to just close your eyes and focus inwards. It's also a very easy technique to teach teenagers and kids.

Source: <https://www.everyday-mindfulness.org/3-quick-mindfulness-practices-to-overcome-worry-anxiety-and-panic/>