

Calming breathing techniques

Rautaki whakamarino hā

Continued over-breathing can leave you feeling exhausted or on edge. This makes it more likely that you will respond to stressful situations with extreme anxiety and panic. To gain control over your breathing, you need to slow your breathing rate. You also need to change your breathing style.

- Ensure you are sitting or lying comfortably and have uninterrupted time to relax.
- Breathe in gently (through your nose if possible).
- Breathe out gently through your nose.
- After you have breathed out, allow a short pause before you breathe in again.
- A natural relaxed breathing pattern is gently in – gently out – then a pause. All your breathing should be through your nose.



Try to practise at least once a day at a time when you can relax relatively free from distraction. Try to set aside some time each day.

This technique can slow your breathing and reduce your general anxiety. It can even help to reduce your anxiety when you are in an anxious situation.

If you have anxiety and have panic attacks, you might like to try the breathing techniques in the following links.

HealthInfo recommends the following pages

- ellenor – *The calming hand* (go to www.ellenor.org and search for “calming hand”)
A factsheet about a technique you can use to control panic attacks or episodes of breathlessness.
- Physiotherapy for Breathing Pattern Disorders – *Self help* (go to www.physiotherapyforbpd.org.uk and click the Self Help link)
Information about “good breathing”, including videos and leaflets about breathing techniques, relaxation, and self-management.

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