



The Best Breathing Exercise I Know: Dr. Weil's 4-7-8 Breath Relaxation Exercise

Hi guys! I am so excited to introduce you to my favorite breathing technique, the 4-7-8. Now, I have been doing yoga for 30 years, and know many breathing techniques. But I now use this one every day, several times a day, and it has decreased my stress levels tremendously. Try it out and PLEASE let me know how you like it!

The 4-7-8 Technique

1. Sit with your back straight. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
2. Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of 4.
3. Hold your breath for a count of 7.
4. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of 8.
5. This is one breath. Inhale again and repeat the cycle 3x more, for a total of 4 breaths.

Are the numbers important?

The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

Why should I do it?

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. This exercise is subtle when you first try it but gains in power with repetition and practice. Use this new skill whenever anything upsetting happens - before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep.

How often?

Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently. Do not do more than 4 breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to 8 breaths. If you feel a little lightheaded when you first breathe this way, do not be concerned - it will pass.

(Adapted from the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine)

Want to learn more? Connect with Susan at www.unlockyourchild.com.