

Calm Breathing Handout

The purpose of the breathing exercise is to slow your breathing. When we get anxious, our breathing rate increases. This rapid breathing can result in decreased levels of carbon dioxide in the blood and can make you feel even more anxious, lightheaded and out of breath.

With practice, these exercises can help you:

- Slow down your breathing
- Increase the amount of carbon dioxide in your blood
- Decrease your anxiety

Breathing instructions:

1. Take a normal breath through your nose with your mouth closed.
2. Exhale slowly through your nose.
3. While you are exhaling, in your head say the words CALM or RELAX.
Say these words slowly to yourself, for example: c-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-l-m or r-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-l-a-x.
4. Count slowly to 4 and then inhale again.
5. Practice this exercise several times a day, taking 10 to 15 breaths at each practice.

Source: *A Brief Prevention Program Training Manual*, Edna B. Foa, Diane E. Hearst, Constance V. Dancu.

