

Some Simple Ways to Bring a Bit of Calm into the Chaos

S.T.O.P.

- S- Stop.** Whenever you notice stress or imbalance, simply pause in awareness.
- T- Take a breath.** Simply bring your awareness into the breathing body, just letting the sensations of the breath move into the forefront. Also, notice how your mind begins to settle a bit, bringing more clarity. Breath awareness actually harmonizes the cardiovascular systems in the body, while also calming the "alarm" centers in the more primitive parts of the brain, restoring full brain function. When we are stressed, we can't think clearly or see any situation accurately.
- O- Observe.** Just notice how the breath begins to naturally bring balance to the systems of the body. Let this be felt. Also, look around. What is really happening, in the moment?
- P- Proceed.** Having shifted to a more mindfully responsive mode, take an action that is more skillful, appropriate and best attuned to your situation.

5 4 3 2 1 Grounding in the Present Moment

These five steps are a way to ground yourself in the present, taking you out of your head and help stop you flooded thoughts. In Cognitive Behavioral Therapy it is believed that your thoughts are directly linked to how you feel and although we feel like we lose control of our thought processes, we have tools that can help us gain back a sense of control and lead to healthier thought patterns. In moments of anxiety it is important to stay present focused to help find symptom relief.

Breathe in and feel your breath, taking a few slower deeper breaths and then move through the list below, noticing at the end how

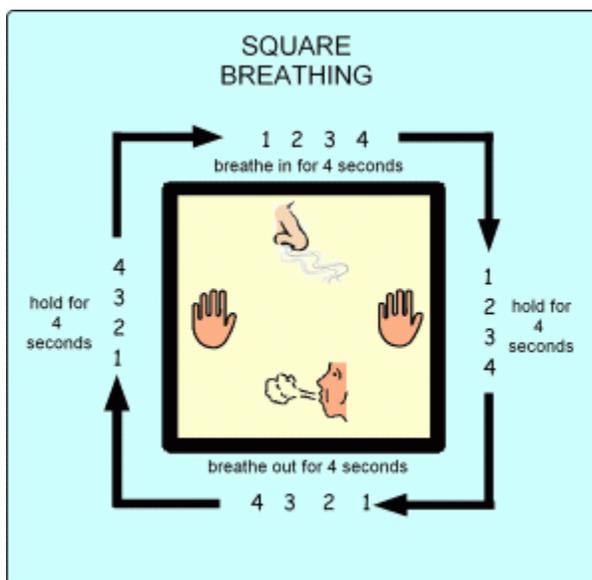
- 5:** Acknowledge **FIVE** things you see around you. Maybe it is a bird, maybe it is pencil, maybe it is a spot on the ceiling, however big or small, state 5 things you see.

5 4 3 2 1 Grounding in the Present Moment (continued)

- 4: Acknowledge **FOUR** things you can touch around you. Maybe this is your hair, hands, ground, grass, pillow, etc, whatever it may be, list out the 4 things you can feel.
- 3: Acknowledge **THREE** things you hear. This needs to be external, do not focus on your thoughts; maybe you can hear a clock, a car, a dog park. or maybe you hear your tummy rumbling, internal noises that make external sounds can count, what is audible in the moment is what you list.
- 2: Acknowledge **TWO** things you can smell: This one might be hard if you are not in a stimulating environment, if you cannot automatically sniff something out, walk nearby to find a scent. Maybe you walk to your bathroom to smell soap or outside to smell anything in nature, or even could be as simple as leaning over and smelling a pillow on the couch, or a pencil. Whatever it may be, take in the smells around you.
1. Acknowledge **ONE** thing you can taste. What does the inside of your mouth taste like, gum, coffee, or the sandwich from lunch? Focus on your mouth as the last step and take in what you can taste.

Square Breathing

-Pema Chodron



- Breathe in for count of 4.
- Hold for count of 4.
- Breathe out for count of 4.
- Hold for count of 4.
- Repeat a few times or as long as needed to help bring some calm

You can trace a square while you are doing this, either on your palm, leg, in your imagination, each count of 4 is one side of the square.

Three-Step Practice

First, come into the present. Flash on what's happening with you right now. Be fully aware of your body, its energetic quality. Be aware of your thoughts and emotions.

Next, feel your heart, literally placing your hand on your chest if you find that helpful. This is a way of accepting yourself just as you are in that moment, a way of saying, "This is my experience right now, and it's okay."

Then go into the next moment without any agenda.

Loving Kindness Meditation

Starting first with yourself and then moving to others, can expand it to completing with "may all beings"

- May I be peaceful
- May I be happy
- May I live with kindness and ease
- May I be free

- May you be peaceful
- May you be happy
- May you live with kindness and ease
- May you be free

Forgiveness Meditation

Finding some quiet space, taking some slow inhales and exhales, perhaps putting your hand on your heart for support and comfort, bringing a sense of kindness to yourself.

Saying first to yourself:

- May I allow myself to make mistakes
- May I allow myself to be imperfect
- May I allow myself to be a learner, learning life's lessons

Forgiveness Meditation (continued)

- I forgive myself
- If I feel not able to do this now, may I forgive myself in future

Then thinking of someone whom I have felt hurt by:

- May I allow you to make mistakes
- May I allow you to be imperfect
- May I allow you to be a learner, learning life's lessons
- I forgive you
- If I feel not able to do this now, may I forgive you in future

And thinking of someone I have harmed:

- May you allow me to make mistakes
- May you allow me to be imperfect
- May you allow me to be a learner, learning life's lessons
- May you forgive me
- If you feel not able to do this now, may you forgive me in future

Sitting for a few more breaths, perhaps repeating the first phrases again, remembering we are all learners, learning life's lessons, each with 10,000 joys and 10,000 sorrows, making our way in this world.