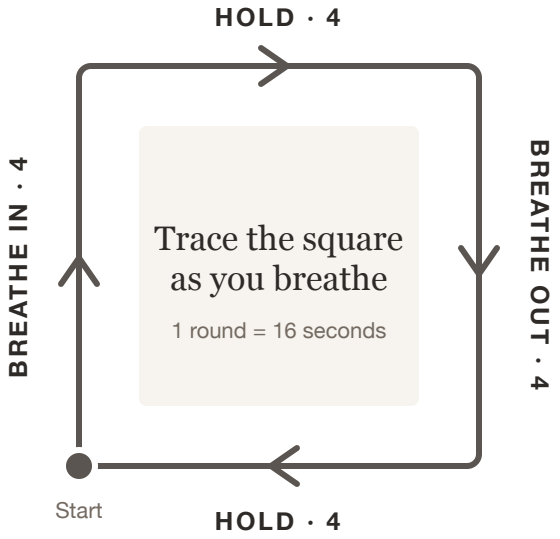
THIRDVOICE

Box Breathing

A one-minute way to calm your body and steady your mind. Also called square breathing. Breathe in, hold, breathe out, hold, four counts each.



How to do it

1. **Get settled.** Feet on the floor, shoulders loose. Lying down works too.
2. **Empty out.** Breathe all the air out slowly through your mouth.
3. **Breathe in for 4** through your nose. Let your belly widen.
4. **Hold for 4.** Keep your jaw soft. A pause, not a strain.
5. **Breathe out for 4** through your mouth, slow and even.
6. **Hold for 4** with your lungs empty. Then go around again.

Start with 4 rounds, about one minute. Build up to 5 minutes a day.

When to use it

- Before a meeting, exam, or hard talk
- When your mind feels scattered
- When your heart is racing
- In the car before you walk in
- Lying awake with a worry

Tips

- If 4 feels long, use 3. Even matters more than long.
- Dizzy or lightheaded? Stop and breathe normally.
- Trace the square with a finger on your leg.
- Practice when calm, so it is there when you need it.

For kids

- Count to 3 instead of 4.
- Trace a square on their palm: up, across, down, across.
- Say it together: "In, two, three. Hold, two, three."
- Use a window or a book as the box.

Rather close your eyes? Let a calm voice count for you, then talk through what set it off.

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Box breathing is a calming tool, not medical treatment. If anxiety or panic gets in the way of daily life, talk to a doctor or therapist. If you have chest pain or trouble breathing that does not ease, get medical help right away. © ThirdVoice