



FREE RESOURCE · ANXIETY AND STRESS · ABOUT 4 MINUTES

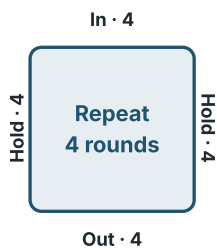
Box breathing

When you're anxious, your breathing often becomes quick and shallow, which can make you feel worse. Box breathing slows things down and gives your mind something steady to follow.

When it can help

- ✓ When you feel stressed, tense or on edge
- ✓ When anxiety is building, before it peaks
- ✓ Before sleep, or before something you're dreading
- ✓ Any time you'd like a moment to reset

How to do it



Think of a square. Each side is one step, and each step is a count of four. Follow it round slowly, as many times as you need.

1

Get comfortable

Sit with your feet flat on the floor, or lie down. Let your shoulders drop and breathe out gently.

2

Breathe in for 4

Breathe in slowly through your nose, counting to four.

3

Hold for 4

Gently hold your breath, counting to four.

4

Breathe out for 4

Breathe out slowly through your mouth, counting to four.

5

Hold for 4

Pause again for a count of four, then start the next round.

Repeat for four rounds, or for a few minutes. Afterwards, let your breathing return to normal and notice how your body feels.

Helpful tips

- ✓ If holding your breath feels uncomfortable, count to three instead, or skip the holds and make each out-breath a little longer than the in-breath.
- ✓ Try tracing a square with your finger as you count.
- ✓ If you feel light-headed, stop and breathe normally.

Need help right now? Call 999 if your life is at risk. For urgent mental health support, call 111 and choose the mental health option, or call Samaritans free on 116 123, any time.

A gentle note. These tools aren't a replacement for counselling or medical care. If something here brings up a lot for you, it's okay to stop. You don't have to work through things on your own. If you'd like to talk to someone, your first counselling session with me is free: 07826 774307 or therapycare.co.uk.