TRANSFORM STRESS WITH YOUR BREATH

Being stressed isn't just a mind thing—we feel it in our bodies, too. When you're stressed, your body is tense and your breathing becomes shallow and constricted—*not* a recipe for endurance! When you release your breath with slow, conscious breathing, your body relaxes. Practice mindful breathing with the steps on the flip side of this card.

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Here's how to practice mindful breathing:

Step 1: Sit or lie in a comfortable position with your back straight. Use any props necessary (under your legs, for instance) to get comfortable. Roll your shoulders forward, up, back, and down, letting them come to rest slightly back so that your chest is open.

Step 2: Place your hands gently on your belly.

Step 3: Inhale into your belly and feel it fill partially with air. Your hands should move as your belly does.

Step 4: Hold your breath while you move your hands to your rib cage.

Step 5: Inhale a bit further into your rib cage.

Step 6: Inhale fully so that the top of your chest expands with air.

Step 7: Exhale slowly in reverse: Feel your breath leave the top of your chest, your rib cage, and your belly. Fully exhale by pressing your navel to your spine. Imagine yourself squeezing out all the stale air in your body.

Step 8: Repeat this sequence several times until your mind relaxes and you're just breathing deeply without effort.

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