

The Count to Calm Breathing

Method:

1. *EXHALE FIRST*. Purse your lips and blow out through your mouth, like you're blowing through a wide drinking straw. Push out as much air as possible.
2. *INHALE* through your nose to the count of four: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4.
3. *HOLD* that breath to the count of five: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5.
4. *BREATHE OUT* through your mouth, exhaling fully, to the count of six, releasing that last bit of air out at the end: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6.
5. *BREATHE IN* through your nose again, letting your body automatically take this breath in more deeply to the count of four: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4. *HOLD* to the count of 5, then *BREATHE OUT* through your mouth to the count of 6.
6. *CONTINUE* until you have finished **THREE COMPLETE BREATHS**.

With each complete breath, you will notice that the air is reaching more deeply into

your lungs, and feels like it is going further down into your belly. Your breathing rate by the end is probably slower, and your heart rate has likely stopped racing. Use the Count to Calm Breathing Method whenever you notice that you are getting tense or anxious, or struggling to manage your feelings in difficult situations. Just three complete breaths with this method are enough to help you clear your head and gain a bit more control over your reactions in the moment. (This is a self-management technique, *not* an avoidance strategy. It does not mean that your issues are resolved, or that you don't have to face what is upsetting you, just that you can be less overwhelmed by anxious thoughts and able to think more clearly.)