The **physiological sigh**—a natural breathing pattern involving two quick inhales followed by a prolonged exhale—plays a critical role in **regulating stress, improving autonomic balance, and promoting emotional well-being**. Research has shown that engaging in physiological sighs can rapidly reduce sympathetic nervous system activity and increase parasympathetic tone, leading to **decreased anxiety and improved mood** (Zaccaro et al., 2018). A 2023 randomized controlled trial by Balban et al. found that just five minutes of daily physiological sighing was **more effective than other breathwork and mindfulness techniques** in lowering stress and enhancing mood, highlighting its potential as a practical tool for self-regulation and mental health maintenance.

References:

- Zaccaro, A., Piarulli, A., Laurino, M., et al. (2018). How Breath-Control Can Change Your Life: A Systematic Review on Psycho-Physiological Correlates of Slow Breathing. _Frontiers in Human Neuroscience_, 12, 353. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2018.00353

- Balban, M. Y., Makhijani, R., Nematipour, R., et al. (2023). Brief structured respiration practices enhance mood and reduce physiological arousal. _Cell Reports Medicine_, 4(1), 100895. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xcrm.2022.100895

🧘 Guided Script: Physiological Sigh Technique (3–5 minutes)

You can read this aloud to yourself or someone else, or record it as an audio guide.

Begin by sitting comfortably or lying down. Close your eyes if you feel safe to do so. Let your hands rest softly in your lap or by your side. Take a moment to settle in.

Now, bring your attention to your breath.
There's nothing to change right now—just observe.

We're going to begin with a few **physiological sighs**—a powerful breathing technique your body already knows how to do, especially in moments of overwhelm or emotion.

Each breath cycle will have **two inhales through the nose**, followed by **one long exhale through the mouth**.

Let's begin:

Inhale through your nose... now inhale again, a little more... and slowly exhale through your mouth...

(Pause for 5 seconds)

Inhale through the nose... a second quick inhale... and exhale slowly through the mouth...

(Pause again)

Allow the exhale to be longer than the inhale. Let it soften your chest and shoulders.

Let's do a few more:

Inhale... top off that breath... exhale slowly...
Feel your body soften just a little more each time.

(Take 2–3 more cycles, slowly guiding each one)

Now let your breathing return to a natural rhythm.

Notice how you feel now—perhaps calmer, lighter, or more grounded.

Let yourself stay here for a few more moments.

When you're ready, gently open your eyes and bring your awareness back to the space around you.

You can use the physiological sigh anytime you feel tension, anxiety, or overstimulation—just 1–3 rounds can make a real difference.