

4-7-8 Breathing



A slow, rhythmic breathing technique that lengthens the exhale, 4-7-8 breathing can help to relax the body and quiet the mind. It is based on **pranayama** (yogic breathing) and used often in clinical and wellness settings.

Benefits of 4-7-8 breathing include:

- It can slow your heart rate and lower blood pressure by placing emphasis on the exhale.
- Focusing on counting can work as a distraction from overwhelming thoughts or feelings
- When used before bed, it can aid sleep by slowing breathing and calming your mind

A step-by-step guide

1. Sit with your back straight, or lie down if you're using it before sleep. Relax your shoulders and rest your tongue lightly against the roof of your mouth, just behind your teeth.
2. Inhale quietly through your nose for 4 counts, filling your belly first, then your chest.
3. Hold your breath for 7 counts, trying to keep your shoulders relaxed and avoid tensing.
4. Exhale completely through your mouth for 8 counts, making a soft "whoosh" sound.
5. Immediately start the next inhale and repeat the cycle. Start with 4 cycles and build up over time to add more time.