



# The Healing Collective

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5-5-8-2

*BREATH*



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## 5-5-8-2 Breath

### Symptoms Addressed

- Emotional awareness and regulation
- Concentration and attention
- Dysregulated interoception
- Stress response
- DSM-5 PTSD arousal and reactivity symptoms



The 5-5-8-2 Breath is a focused breathing technique in which clients direct their attention to the breath, counting to five as they inhale, then holding the breath for five counts, and then exhaling for eight counts, and then holding for another two counts. This sequence is repeated for several minutes. The 5-5-8-2 Breath is like the Five-Count Breath, except with an elongation of exhalation and a brief holding of the breath after exhalation. Extended exhalations are often preferable, as they emphasize longer parasympathetic (relaxation response) activation. During inhalation, the sympathetic nervous system becomes slightly activated; during exhalation, the parasympathetic nervous system becomes slightly activated, which is why longer exhales are encouraged in diaphragmatic breathing techniques.

### 5-5-8-2 BREATH TIPS

- Instruct clients to breathe through the diaphragm, as opposed to engaging in shallow chest breathing.
- This exercise can be completed standing, lying down, or sitting.
- If participants feel comfortable closing their eyes during this practice, this is recommended. If not, they may find a place on the floor to gently focus their eyes on.
- It is recommended that this technique be practiced for approximately five minutes, multiple times per day.

