Breathing slowly and rhythmically makes your body feel like it does when you are relaxed. This sends a message to your brain to calm down. Focusing on your breathing can also reduce your sense of stress by clearing your mind of negative thoughts.

**Belly breathing**

> Find a relaxed, comfortable position. Keep your back straight, but not tight. Put a hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other on your chest.

> Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out as the muscles relax. Your chest should not move.

> Hold that breath for a moment, then breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Straighten the back. Let belly muscles tighten. Feel the hand on your belly go in.

> Take your time with each breath. Try to increase each in and out breath. Notice where you feel your breath in your body – chest, abdomen, nostrils.

> Your mind may wander. That’s OK. Just notice the wandering and gently redirect your attention back to your breathing.

> Do this 5 to 10 times.

**Square breathing**

> Find a comfortable position. Take several slow natural breaths. Close your eyes and picture a square. Choose one corner to be your starting point.

> Count slowly to four as you inhale through your nose. Picturing your breath moving up one side of the square. You can also trace an outline of a square with your finger.

> Then count slowly to four as you hold your breath and visualize moving across the next side.

> Then move down next side; count slowly to four while exhaling.

> Then hold without breathing in or out for a count of four on the last side.

> Repeat 2 to 4 times.

**Breathing meditation**

> Relax. Allow the body and mind to settle. Do what helps you become comfortable. Create a stable base for yourself. Gently allow eyes to close.

> Take a few complete, deep breaths, in and out. Then trust the breath to continue on its own.

> Notice where your breath is most obvious in the body. It may be the movement of your belly or chest or a sensation beneath your nostrils.

> As you breathe in, focus on connecting with things as they are. As you breathe out, focus on accepting and/or releasing.

> It’s OK if your mind wanders. When you become aware, that’s a moment of mindfulness! Note what has happened and gently guide your thoughts back to your breath. It’s always OK to begin again.

> Continue to focus on your in and out breaths for several minutes.

> Then wiggle your fingers and toes and gently open your eyes. Take your time to adjust. Note your experience. Notice any difference between when you began and now.