



FACTSHEET

4-7-8 BREATHING

WHAT IS 4-7-8 BREATHING?

4-7-8 breathing is a breathing technique, pioneered by Dr Andrew Weil. It involves regulating your breathing to various counts of 4, 7 and 8. The method is described as a 'natural tranquiliser for the nervous system' helping to reduce tension in the body. It lets oxygen better fill the lungs, calms the mind and relaxes muscles. The technique is based on pranayama, an ancient Indian practice that means 'regulation of breath.'

HOW DO I DO 4-7-8 BREATHING?

It is utterly simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere.

1. To do the 4-7-8 breathing technique, you first need to exhale completely through your mouth while making a 'whoosh' sound.
2. Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
3. Now hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
4. After this time has elapsed, exhale completely through your mouth, making another whoosh sound for **eight** counts in one large breath.
5. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three times for a total of four breaths.

Note: you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation.

The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4-7-8 is what's important.

Go on.... Try it!

HOW OFTEN DO I DO 4-7-8 BREATHING?

One set is four cycles of 4-7-8 breathing. Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently. Do not do more than four breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to eight breaths.

WHY WOULD IT BE HELPFUL TO ME?

The 4-7-8 breathing exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. It is subtle when you first try it but gains in power with repetition and practice.

Once you develop this technique by practicing it every day, it will be a very useful tool that you will always have with you. Use it whenever anything upsetting happens - before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep. This exercise cannot be recommended too highly. Everyone can benefit from it.

Another reason I recommend 4-7-8 breathing is because it can be a stepping-stone into meditation, mindfulness and mindful breathing. For most people our minds are too restless to begin a meditation practice, without frustration or exasperation. If you have been practicing 4-7-8 breathing for a few weeks you will be more relaxed, and you'll already be familiar with watching your breath. Both of these are helpful to mindfulness beginners.

I hope you find the information on this factsheet helpful. If you have any questions email moodfoodmove at: moodfoodmove@gmail.com 😊