

Addressing Anxiety- Box Breathing Exercise

Instructions: While doing this exercise, try to breathe deeply into your belly. If you notice only your chest rises, work on your breathing to see if you can breathe deeply and see movement in the abdomen. You may choose 4 or 5 seconds for the exercise, based on preference.

Steps:

1. **Inhale:** Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose for 4-5 seconds, allowing the belly to expand.
2. **Hold:** Hold the breath for 4-5 seconds.
3. **Exhale:** Release the breath slowly through your mouth for 4-5 seconds, allowing all the air out of your lungs.
4. **Pause:** Hold your breath for 4-5 seconds at the bottom of your exhale.
5. **Repeat:** Repeat the cycle as many times as necessary to achieve regulated breathing and improved relaxation.

One of my favorites is progressive muscle relaxation, where we combine the breathing exercise with tightening and relaxing of the muscles, which achieves a more whole-body relaxation. This exercise is great for when the body feels tight and tense, after a nightmare, and can even be done when at work and we notice ourselves getting dysregulated.