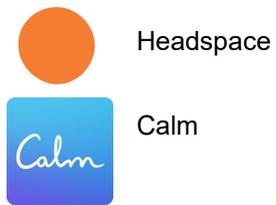


Want to try more breathing techniques for relaxation? Try these apps, found on iPhone and Android:



7/11 Breathing Technique

To calm minds, bodies and de-stress.

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What is the 7/11 Breathing Technique and what is it used for?

The 7/11 technique is a breathing exercise where you breathe in for a count of 7 seconds and out for a count of 11 seconds. It is used to help you relax and gain/regain composure in a variety of situations.

What can it be used for?

You can use this throughout the day to relax, de-stress and re-energise. It can help your concentration levels before an exam, and helps you re-focus on the task at hand. In general it helps almost any state which leads to heightened emotion.

How does it work?

It works in several ways:

- It works on the body's autonomic nervous system. When we breathe in, receptors are stimulated to quicken our heartbeat, increasing breathing rate and increasing adrenalin production, and when we breathe out receptors are stimulated to slow our heartbeat, reduce our breathing rate and decrease adrenaline production. Because it needs a degree of concentration to work it helps us take our minds off other things.
- It also works because as it relaxes us it promotes access to the rational thinking part of the brain which gets shut down in stressful situations, allowing us to think our way around problems or stresses we face.

First, count from one to seven on each "in" breath...



...then, counting at the same rate, count from one to eleven on each "out" breath.

Is it difficult to learn?

Not at all! Anyone who can breathe and count to 11 can learn it:

- 1) Find somewhere quiet and comfortable to sit and relax.
- 2) It helps, when you are first practicing, to sit in front of a mirror so that you can see your progress.
- 3) Sit comfortably either on a cushion or a chair with your shoulders relaxed and your hands folded gently over your tummy.
- 4) If possible breathe in and out through your nose. Breathe in for a count of 7 seconds and out for a count of 11 seconds (if you find it too hard to breathe out for so long, start off with 3/6 seconds and work up to 7/11 seconds). The most important thing here is to breathe out longer than you breathe in.
- 5) If you are doing it correctly, your shoulders will remain still and your tummy will get bigger and smaller as you breathe (called belly or diaphragmatic breathing). If you sit in front of a mirror you can keep an eye on your shoulders and tummy.
- 6) Once you can keep your shoulders still and relaxed without effort it is a good idea to close your eyes and try to picture the numbers in your mind to help you concentrate completely on your breathing.

