



Stressed?

TRY THIS FAST, EASY, AND POWERFUL
TECHNIQUE RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE.

Stress. Maybe you feel it when you're running late, stuck in traffic, before an important meeting, waiting for that counter, in a conversation or listening to the news. Stress, our body's response to pressure can be triggered by feelings of overwhelm, loss of control, unexpected events or anything that threatens our sense of self and well-being. Stress can be healthy, even motivating, spurring us to accomplish and achieve great things or simply tackle our to-do list. Yet, unmanaged and chronic stress can interfere with our overall health and our ability to do our best work.

Consciously, we often rationalize our stress with our thoughts like, "I got this," while our brain reacts quite differently. Our brain overrides "I got this" with the response, "Tiger! Run!" as it perceives our stress as fight or flight. Suddenly, our body shifts our energy resources toward fighting off a life threat or frantically fleeing from a perceived enemy.

Our brain does not differentiate between that lucrative deal going south or a tiger attack as it begins to protect our body, flooding our system with the stress hormone cortisol. Too much cortisol elevates our heart rate, increases our blood pressure, tenses our muscles, quickens and shallows our breath, and increases the energy required to deal with the stress at hand. Continuous activation of our nervous system this way can greatly affect not only our bodies, our ability to sleep, and our metabolism, but can also greatly affect our thinking, our work, our relationships, and our lives.

Life happens, and stressors abound. So sans time on Bali in a tiki hut (insert your dream escape from it all here), one simple, science-backed technique can not only help gain mastery over our thoughts of stress but also alter our body's very response to it.

Most think, when stressed, the solution is to work on our MIND. But in fact, the fastest, easiest, and most powerful way to de-stress is through our BREATH. Altering our breathing can be a game changer in how our body perceives stress while reducing the detrimental effects of stress on our overall well-being.

One method I utilize in my coaching is the '5-5-7 Breath'. This method is an inhale through the nose for five seconds, holding the breath for five seconds, and slowly exhaling through the nose for seven seconds. This conscious breathing method ignites our body's relaxation response, tuning into a heightened awareness, lowering our heart rate and blood pressure, and reducing stress hormones in the blood.

When we consciously alter our breathing pattern, we improve the oxygen capacity in our blood and begin to feel more energy, stamina, and a sense of well-being. As we change the rhythm of our breath, our body naturally relaxes. As we relax and breathe with an intentional rhythm, we then can control our body's responses from "fight or flight" to "rest and digest," creating a sense of calm, and thus thinking more rationally. By altering our breathing, we can actually trick our central nervous system, turn off stress, and activate a psychological and

physical relaxation response. The brain says something like, "Hey, I thought I was a nervous wreck, but I'm breathing like a relaxed person so I must be relaxed." The result is a real shift and can be done anywhere — in the car, in a meeting or a conversation, before bed, or anytime you begin to feel the onset of stress.

There are many various breathing methods to explore and try. The next time you find yourself feeling panicky, uptight, stressed, anxious, or even weary, try changing your breathing pattern and instantly ignite relaxation, calm, peace, and tranquility into your mind, body, and the very situation at hand. It's fast, easy, free, and literally right under your nose.



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