

4x4 Tactical or Square Breathing

This is a simple but powerful stress management technique used by military Special Forces to calm them prior to combat. It was developed after extensive research, and if it works for life threatening situations, it will work for your stress. It has a powerful calming effect on the human nervous system. As your body relaxes, you will worry less and your mind will also become quieter. You will also cope better – we always cope best when calm.

The Technique:

- 1. Inhale (through your nose) for a count of 4**
- 2. Hold your breath for a count of 4**
- 3. Exhale (through your mouth) for a count of 4**
- 4. Hold your breath for a count of 4**

Additional Pointers:

- You can vary the speed of your count if you begin to feel uncomfortable or short of breath. Or just stop and breathe normally until you feel ready to do it again.
- Practice improves results. During times of high stress repeat for approximately 5 minutes at least 4 times per day. You can do it longer if you find a comfortable pace and as you improve over time through practice of the technique.
- Should not be done during an asthma attack, if you have diabetes (check with your doctor first) or by individuals with respiratory disorders (such as COPD).
- Some people find it easier to do this by counting the following way: In 2, 3, 4; Hold 2, 3, 4; Out 2, 3, 4; Hold 2, 3, 4. That way the first count of each phase reminds you what you are doing.
- The APP: There is a cheap app you can buy for your smart phone to help you practice and keep count. It is called “Tactical Breathing.”

Advantages

- Free! Will never cost you a dime.
- Non-addictive
- No negative side-effects
- Can do it almost anywhere
- Once you get the hang of it, no one will know you are doing it
- Works immediately to calm worry, stress and anxiety
- If done long term, it re-trains the brain to stay calm in most situations. Things that used to rob your peace of mind don't touch you.