

# The Power of Breathwork

## Breathwork is an Important Part of Mental Health

Breathwork exercises interrupt stress cycles by promoting a relaxation response in the body. It is easily accessible, requires little education, no specialized skills, and can be done by anyone without equipment or cost. Studies have found a decrease in anxiety, depression, and stress levels in individuals who participate in breathwork practices. Data also supports the claim that those who utilize breathing exercises have improved sleep.

## Different Types of Breathwork Strategies



### [Alternate Nostril Breathing](#)

In this breathing exercise, you plug your right nostril while taking a breath in and out of the left nostril. Then, you plug your left nostril and inhale and exhale out of your right nostril. This cycle repeats for about two minutes, or until you feel ready to end your practice.

This type of deep breathing exercise can help reduce stress and give you a boost of energy.



### [Box Breathing](#)

In this practice, you count 2 seconds for each inhale and exhale. You may find it helpful to visualize a box or square in your mind or in the environment around you. Start by breathing in for 2 seconds, then exhaling for 2 seconds, then inhale for 2 seconds, and exhale for another 2 seconds. Repeat this cycle for about 5 minutes, or until you feel ready to end your practice.

This type of breathing helps reduce stress, as it activates your parasympathetic nervous system.

It is also a helpful tool for regulating your breath.



### Bumblebee Breathing

Bumblebee Breathing is a powerful practice in which you place your fingers in specific locations around your face and ears. While your hands are in place, you will take deep breaths in, and hum while you exhale.

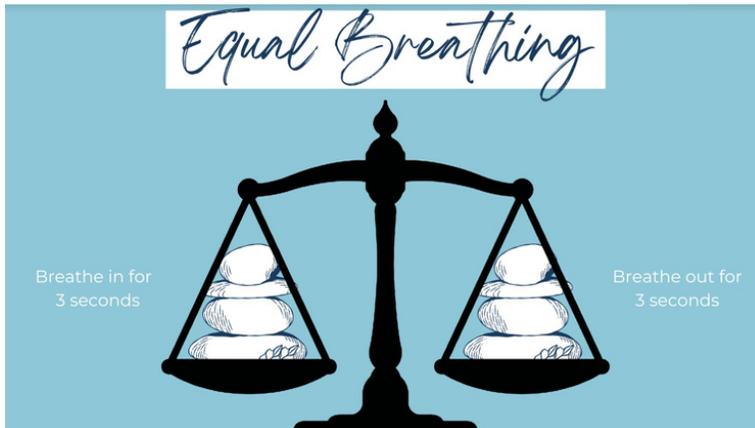
By participating in this type of breathing, you allow yourself a moment of peace.



### Rectangle Breathing

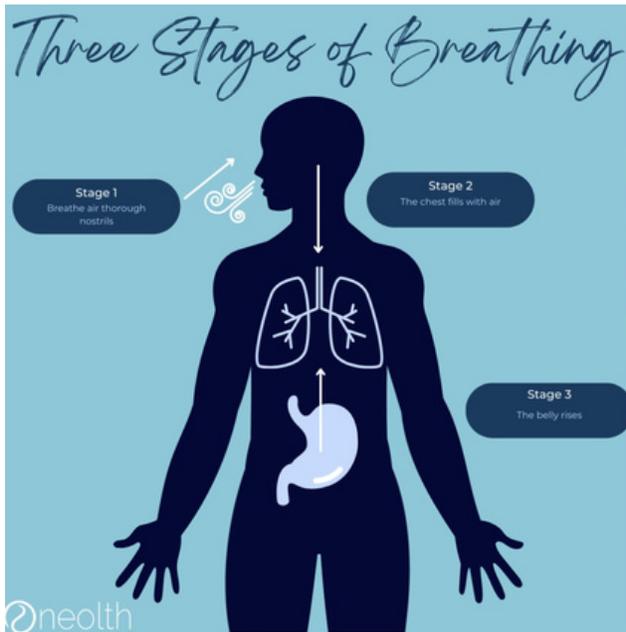
Rectangle Breathing is similar to box breathing in that you inhale for 2 seconds; however, in rectangle breathing, you exhale for 4 seconds. Again, visualizing a rectangle may be helpful for you while you participate in this practice.

This deep breathing exercise activates your parasympathetic nervous system to help reduce stress.



### Equal Breathing

The Equal Breathing practice involves inhaling a deep breath for 3 seconds, then exhaling for 3 seconds. This pattern continues for about 5 minutes or until you feel refreshed and relaxed.



### [Continuous Three Stage Breathing](#)

In the Continuous Three Stage Breathing Exercise, you will focus on the physical act of inhaling and exhaling your breath. You will notice the air entering your nostrils, feel the air fill your lungs, and become aware of the rising of your belly as breathe deeply. This method of focusing your attention on your breath helps you relax your body and mind.

## Incorporate it in your life

Breathwork can be very effective for calming your body down during times of acute psychological distress (i.e. stress, feelings of anxiousness or nervousness). Breathwork can be utilized during other times of the day to relax yourself and become present in the moment. You might practice breathwork when you wake up, while you eat breakfast, on your commute to school or work, or before bed.

## Tips for integrating into the classroom

- *Moments of tension or stress*– if a student is challenged by their emotions, guide them through an easy-to-follow exercise to help them calm themselves down.
- *Brain Break*– Carve out time before or after transitioning between academic activities for your students to have “brain breaks”. Guide them through a breathing exercise or play one of Neolth’s practices.
- *While watching a calming video*– if you’re worried about your students getting bored while doing breathwork, use a video in conjunction as a part of a brain break!
- *Remember the importance of helping your students*– 87% of students are more likely to use a resource recommended by the school. For more information, read [this Neolth post](#).

#### References

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