Learn Breathing Exercises to Help With Anxiety

When you have to deal with social situations, anxiety can make the experience debilitating.

One way to relax before these types of situations is to learn breathing exercises. This is when you use deep breathing as a way to relax and de-stress before something fearful or that causes anxiety.

The Basics of Deep Breathing

What is deep breathing is and how it can help you?

It may seem simple since breathing is something you do without realizing it constantly, but deep breathing is a little different. It allows you to focus on each breath as you exaggerate inhaling and exhaling. This can help with so many things, from helping to stop a panic attack, to relaxing you before doing something you are fearful about. It gives you something else to focus on, not to mention how much stress it can relieve. There isn't really a right or wrong way to do it, as long as you are breathing in and out and focusing on the breaths while forgetting about the worries in your mind.

You may want to sit up on a chair, without leaning back, and count your breaths 1) inhale 2) exhale 3) inhale 4) exhale, etc. If you like to close your eyes, you can, but it is absolutely not necessary. The counting gives you something to put your attention on and you can do this throughout the day and keep track of in a journal. Practicing deep breathing in advance of a stressful situation will actually help you get through that situation with more ease. You can use the deep breathing secretly in a social setting to keep you calmer and

more in control of any raising anxiety.

Simple Breathing Exercise

Here is a simple way to start deep breathing. Sit in a comfortable spot to practice deep breathing, preferably where you are alone and won't get a lot of distractions. Close your eyes and inhale a deep breath. Focus on the inhaling, from the sound it makes to how it feels in your chest and lungs. Hold the breath for 5 seconds, then release and focus on exhaling. Make it loud and exaggerated if you need to do that to relax, and focus only on the breathing. Do this back and forth for a few minutes.

After you have completed the exercise, check in with your body and mind and notice if you feel differently. Do you feel a greater sense of calm?

Incorporating Meditation

Deep breathing is used in many different practices, including yoga and meditation. Meditation is also great for social anxiety, so it is a good idea if you can start your breathing exercises while also learning to meditate. During deep breathing, you are focusing only on your breaths, so that you are beginning to clear your headspace. This is also how you start learning how to meditate, so you can do both practices at the
same time.

Try to breathe in deeply and empty your mind of all your worries and fears, and you will notice that your anxiety begins to reduce and you can handle more social situations. Don't get upset if your mind goes racing when you first start to meditate. It is perfectly natural for your mind to wander,

to think about all the things you have to do today, or tomorrow, or what you "should" have done yesterday.

If you are really bothered by the thoughts that arise, tell yourself you will make a list when you open your eyes. Chances are you'll forget most of them by the time the timer goes off. But if you do remember, just make a list when you are done meditating.

—

If you would like to learn more about incorporating meditation into your life, you may like to watch my video "**Making Time for Meditation**" on YouTube (a Live video on Facebook from an event on the closed FB Group Transformation Society). In it you'll get to experience three different meditation techniques.