

# 5-9 Breathing

## How it works:

A great technique for relaxing at any time is 5-9 breathing. Breathe in to a count of 5 and breathe out to a count of 9. If a count of 5 and 9 is too long, count to 4 and 8 instead.

You can practice this special type of breathing anywhere. Make sure to breathe deep into your belly or diaphragm which is below your chest. The important thing is that the out breathe must be longer than the in breath. This causes stimulation of the part of your nervous system responsible for relaxation. This is a basic law of biology and if you breathe in this way then your body will relax.

The more you do it, the more you'll notice the benefits.

It may take a few minutes but the body will respond regardless of what your mind is thinking.

## How to do it:

1. Sit in a chair comfortably with your back straight and both feet on the floor.
2. Place one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest. Follow your breath with your mind.
3. Breathe in on a count of 5 (or 4) expanding your belly like a balloon.
4. Breathe out on a count of 9 (or 8) letting the air out of the balloon. Pucker up like you are whistling to slow your exhale.
5. Focus on the sound and feeling of deeper, slower, and longer breaths. When your mind wanders gently but firmly bring it back to your breath.
6. Start with 2 minutes a day. Set a timer so you don't have to watch the clock. Just 2 minutes a day makes a difference. If you want to go further add 1 minute a week until you reach 10 minutes a day.
7. Explore the *iPause* website at [www.oakland.edu/ipause](http://www.oakland.edu/ipause) under *Be Mindful* for guided meditations and great apps.

