



*JSE Health*  
HOLISTIC INTEGRATIVE VITALISING

# QUICK GUIDE TO BREATHING TECHNIQUES THAT CALM THE MIND

Inside you will find  
simple strategies you  
can use right away

Don't let your  
thoughts drag you  
down learn to control  
them with your breath





# BREATHING TECHNIQUES TO CALM THE MIND

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Buddhists have referred to our mind as the “monkey mind” for thousands of years. And there is a very good reason for this analogy; because like a monkey it can be restless, unsettled, scared, erratic, volatile, whimsical, over-imaginative, unrealistic, confused, indecisive and uncontrollable. Any of this sound familiar? DOES YOUR MIND ever do this?

It can jump from the past, thinking about what happened in that meeting at work yesterday, to the future thinking about what you are going to wear out to dinner tomorrow ; to “hang on a minute I need to go hang the washing out!” All of this within seconds.

As erratic as it seems the mind is trying to protect you and get things done, it is always talking to you where ever you go giving you an opinion. But it doesn't always get things right and sometimes needs to be told to SHUT UP!! (probably more often than not- lets be honest). Especially if its going off down a dark path we don't want it to.



# Taming the Mind

How do we tame it? Not by trying to force it to stop, or putting it in a cage, as it will fight back. And you can't make friends with it by giving it a banana or other treats. What you need to do is give it a job to do, keep it busy. The best job is to ask it to watch the breath. It's that simple. What we often forget is that the physical body can be a gateway to communicating with our mental thoughts. And you can get it to do this activity anytime, anywhere you need it to.

## 4 7 8 Breath Technique

This is one such breathing technique. It simply involves exhaling completely through your mouth with force to make a "whoosh" sound. Close your mouth and inhale through your nose slowly to the count of 4. Then hold your breathe for the count of 7 and exhale completely through your mouth for a count of 8.



## Pranayamas

Often used in yoga classes and believe it or not there is actually more than one of these. So you can go nuts googling away to find more.

But the most simple to start with is Anulom Vilom which is known as "alternate nostril breathing". You use your thumb and ring finger on the same hand to close each nostril with the index and middle finger folded. You block one nostril at a time and breathe in for a count of 4, block both nostrils and hold your breathe for a count of 16. Then exhale through the alternate nostril for a count of 8. And keep cycling through.

Or my favourite Ujjayi aka "vicious breathing" where you want to make the sound of the ocean in your throat. You breathe in through your nose and with your mouth closed you engage the throat to try and make the ocean sound. Or you can think of it like you are trying to fog up glass in front of your mouth but it stays closed.

If you feel like being a bit more vocal you can try Bhramari or "Humming Bee Breath". Stick your index fingers in each ear and then breathe in through your nostrils and breathe out with your mouth closed making a humming sound.



Good luck taming the monkey! : )