

4–7–8 Breathing Guide

Teaching Your Body It Is Safe

When the body feels threatened, the breath becomes shallow and rapid. This simple pattern signals your nervous system to stand down — and with practice, it becomes a reflex of calm you can access anywhere.

THE PATTERN

INHALE	4 counts	Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 full counts.
HOLD	7 counts	Hold the breath gently — no tension, just stillness.
EXHALE	8 counts	Release through your mouth with a soft whoosh for 8 counts.
REPEAT	4 cycles	Complete 4 full cycles. Once or twice daily to start.

WHY IT WORKS

Lengthening the exhale activates your body's rest-and-settle system, easing muscle tension and slowing racing thoughts. Counting gives your mind something simple and predictable to follow — breaking the worry loop and grounding you in the present moment.

MAKE IT STICK

- Link it to daily cues — before a meeting, after parking, as you turn out the light.
- Mark four cycles on a sticky note each day for one week.
- If 7 counts feels too long, start with 4-4-6 and build gradually.
- If you feel lightheaded, pause and return to normal breathing.

Note: Those with respiratory or heart conditions should use a gentler version or check with a clinician first.

"I am not my anxious thoughts. I can breathe, ground, and take one small, wise step."

— *Kindle the Light, Chapter 1*