

COUNT ON YOURSELF

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Breathing Meditation

Noëlla Piquette, Ph.D. Registered Psychologist

This is an adaptation of Pali, a technique of breath counting in Buddhist meditation. It focuses on drawing mental attention to breathing by counting inhalation and exhalation cycles numerically. Meditation is focused on one thing - to gently and deliberately withdraw our attention from distractors – by stilling the mind. Deliberately counting has powerful effects on decreasing the internal chatter of inattention.

Plus it's simple. Sit down, relax, close your eyes, and quietly count in your head while breathing rhythmically. Slow with long, controlled inhales and exhales. When counting with real intention, your mind naturally starts to align with the counting and withdraws from thought, anxiety, and other distractions. By slowly bringing your mind back to the count, again and again, you start to train your awareness, and build your meditation practice.

I recommend silent counting on each long exhalation, beginning at 1, another long exhalation for 2 and so forth, with a conclusion at 10. As some may want to increase this number, recall that meditation practices are personal and individualized. Do what works for you. Finish by taking a deep breath, open your eyes, stretch, and congratulate yourself on your meditation practice.

Note: This is an excellent grounding activity for anxiety reduction. An adult can mirror the regulated breathing with verbal counting for youngsters.



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