

# Using Mindfulness to slow down & refocus

## Exercise: 3 Breaths & 3 Wishes



We can all use a breather throughout the day—a way to **ground and reconnect** with ourselves and the people and places around us.

However, grounding and reconnecting to the present moment doesn't always have to be an hour-long yoga class or 20-minute meditation. **Sometimes all it takes is 30 seconds!** Use this quick pick-me-up throughout the day to ground, reconnect, refocus, and remind yourself what matters.

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## Instructions

### TAKE A STEP BACK

If you catch yourself feeling overwhelmed, anxious or stressed, immediately stop what you are doing and take a mental step back. Use the slowing and calming process of 3 Breaths and 3 Wishes, as follows:

**1**

#### **BREATH 1 IS FOR YOU**

Count to 4 as you inhale filling your lungs and diaphragm with as much air as you can. As you exhale, make a wish for yourself.

**2**

#### **BREATH 2 IS FOR ANOTHER PERSON (FRIEND, FAMILY, PET, ETC.)**

Count to 4 as you inhale filling your lungs and diaphragm with as much air as you can. As you exhale, make a wish for that person.

**3**

#### **BREATH 3 IS FOR A GROUP, (FAMILY, CLASSROOM, COUNTRY ETC.)**

Count to 4 as you inhale filling your lungs and diaphragm with as much air as you can. As you exhale, make a wish for the group.

### **YOU'RE ALL DONE—CARRY ON!**

3 breaths later and there's been a shift - in your breathing rate, your attitude and perspective. Deeper than that, you've taught your brain how to calm itself and regain control when it's stressed. Feel free to repeat at any point in the day when you need to regroup. Share this practice with others! It works.

## **Reflections & Actions**

**Practice deep breathing again and note down how your body changes.**

**How does this affect your thoughts and how your body feels?**

**When would it be useful to remember to use these exercises?**

# Turn Negative Thought into Positive Action



## Exercise: So What Then?

Imagining the worst of a situation is a survival mechanism—it's a way of equipping our brains with the tools to handle life-threatening circumstances. However, it can really cause us to panic and freeze, so we feel incapable of thinking through fairly simple situations. Instead of fighting your brain's ability to think up the worst- case scenario, embrace it! It's much easier to handle negative thoughts when we allow ourselves to acknowledge them. Therefore, when you feel like you're spiraling, ask yourself "so what then?" 5 times to help rationalize and break down daunting situations..

It's good to practice this now, so you are prepared when it happens in real life ;)



**I'm going to fail my quiz.**

SO WHAT THEN?

**I'll have to study extra hard on the final.**

SO WHAT THEN?

**I'll probably have to pull an all-nighter.**

SO WHAT THEN?

**I won't be able to stay up.**

SO WHAT THEN?

**Maybe I'll ask my friend to come to the library with me. We'll bring study snacks.**

SO WHAT THEN?

**That could be fun.**



# Instructions

1

## TAKE A STEP BACK

When you find your brain spiraling from a negative thought, take a moment to stop what you're doing and breathe (see Three Breaths & Three Wishes).

2

## ACKNOWLEDGE

Acknowledge the negative thought. What is it? Is there a big test coming up? Is there a school dance or big game or play? Whatever it is, write it down and look at it, or say it out loud.

3

## ASK "SO WHAT THEN?"

Once you've determined the negative thought, ask yourself "So What Then?" and allow yourself to actually come up with a realistic answer. Write it down or say it out loud. Look at/hear it objectively.

4

## REPEAT X 4

Repeat this process 4 more times. Doing so will help you rationalize those worst case scenario/slippery slope thoughts and reground yourself.

## The Goal

The goal is to reach one of the following conclusions:

### I'LL BE OKAY

The likelihood of what I'm thinking about occurring or standing true is extremely low

### I'LL LEARN SOMETHING

Perhaps this will be hard, but there is something to learn and grow from

### I BELIEVE IN MYSELF

It seems impossible right now, but I believe in myself, my abilities, and those of the people around me

## Reflections & Actions

Record the most powerful ways that you turned around worrying scenarios in the exercise and refer back if you ever need some inspiration.

Remember that you are not alone; everyone faces challenges. Breaking them down into steps can make them more manageable.

Usually, worrying about situations is far worse than being in the middle of them.

***You can do this!***

# Navigating Your Anxiety

## Exercise: My Action Plan



Using the boxes below, along the left side write down three situations that create anxiety for you. Then along the right side, write down something you can do to distract yourself in the moment from each one of those stressful situations.

Then, write down the names and phone numbers of people you can talk to when you're feeling a lot of anxiety. It can be an adult in your life, a close friend or a teacher at school.

**SITUATION THAT CREATES ANXIETY:**

**I CAN DISTRACT FROM THE SITUATION BY...**

**SITUATION THAT CREATES ANXIETY:**

**I CAN DISTRACT FROM THE SITUATION BY...**

**SITUATION THAT CREATES ANXIETY:**

**I CAN DISTRACT FROM THE SITUATION BY...**

### WHEN I NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE, I WILL TALK TO:

**NAME:**

**PHONE:**

**NAME:**

**PHONE:**

**NAME:**

**PHONE:**