

HOW TO

CALM YOUR SYMPATHETIC
NERVOUS SYSTEM

WITH BREATHING & MINDFULNESS



**Box
breathing**



**Diaphragmatic
breathing**



Grounding



Mindfulness

BOX BREATHING

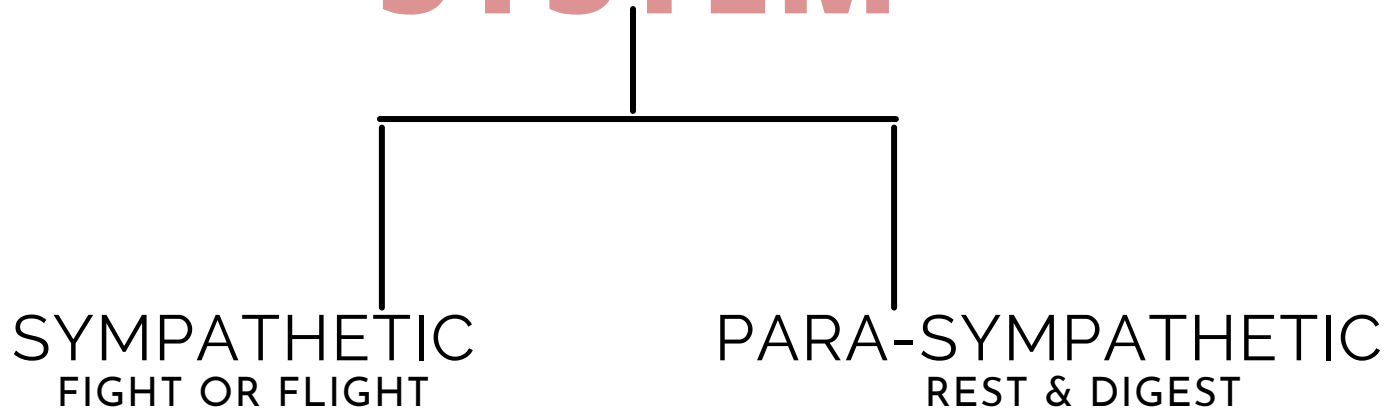
Box breathing is the process of evening your breath and calming your sympathetic nervous system.

Through this process, imagine a box. This box is a square (or can be a rectangle, but more on that later) and the counts are 4 seconds on each side. exhale completely, then slowly inhale for a 4 count, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and hold for 4. Repeat this process slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Too much can make you feel strange at first, so I recommend taking it slowly and considering decreasing the number of seconds in your box. Consider making a rectangle (4, 3, 4, 3) or a smaller square (3, 3, 3, 3).

Keep your focus on the count, rather than your surroundings.

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM



Think of a time you felt anxious. Your body likely felt on high alert and 'different' than it does at normal rest. That is the feeling of your active sympathetic nervous system.

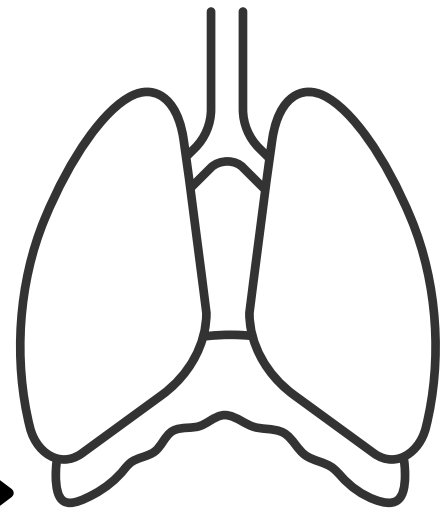
Now think of a time you felt calm. You likely felt in control and collected. This is your parasympathetic nervous system working for you.

We want both to work for us, but we want to be able to transition from sympathetic to parasympathetic when we are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, distressed, or dizzy. This will help decrease dizziness and improve our day to day symptoms.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Diaphragmatic breathing refers to where you are breathing, rather than how long you are breathing.

Your diaphragm is the voluntary muscle at the bottom of your rib cage, separating your lung space from your stomach.



You can practice this any time you're feeling dizzy, woozy, imbalanced, or uncomfortable.

Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach. As you breathe in through your nose, try to inflate your stomach while keeping your chest still (but it will move a little bit).

Then breathe out through your mouth with pursed lips. Take deep and slow breaths into your stomach.

This is difficult to learn, so give yourself some grace when you start to practice. Add this to box breathing as you improve!

GROUNDING

The practice of grounding refers to sitting on a firm surface and reminding yourself how still you are.

Your feet, legs, bottom, back, and arms should be touching a still & firm surface.

If, when you sit in a chair, your feet don't touch the ground, you should place a big book or a stool under them so they are touching the surface. Your feet touching is the most important part (this is how you can do this standing as well as you improve).

Starting with your feet, feel your body still against the surface. Remind yourself of your calming mantra (see below). Repeat this mantra, while you breathe (regular, box, and/or diaphragmatically). Your eyes can be opened and focused on a still point in front of you or closed; wherever you're most comfortable.

You can do this sitting in a firm chair, lying down, standing, or seated against the wall on the floor.



MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is the practice of being completely present in any given moment. Being present can mean putting down your phone while with others, or excusing yourself to be present internally with yourself.



Being mindful means that you are aware of your surroundings and yourself in the present moment. It means to be completely present with acceptance and objectivity of your experience.

Too often with dizziness, we are judgemental of the feeling of dizziness and begin to catastrophize about it. Thoughts like 'am I going to feel like this forever? This is never going to go away. I am doomed to be dizzy forever'

MINDFULNESS & GROUNDING WORKSHEETS

Think of a mantra to tell yourself during grounding. What will make you feel safe, calm, and secure?

Take some time to reflect on yourself and your life. Use the prompts below to help.

What are you proud
of yourself for?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

What do you love
about yourself?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

MINDFULNESS & GROUNDING WORKSHEETS

Think of a mantra to tell yourself during grounding. What will make you feel safe, calm, and secure?

Take some time to reflect on yourself and your life. Use the prompts below to help.

**What makes you
feel anxious?**

Try to be objective about your anxieties. Do not judge yourself for feeling anxious. Let the thought or feeling pass by without judgement as you write these down.

**What makes you
feel calm?**

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

- Can you replace anxious emotions with a calming activity?
- How can you practice being calm in anxious environments?
- How can you practice being calm when feelings of dizziness come up?

Try to work in grounding, breathing, and/or a mindfulness exercise for at least a few minutes daily. This can be any time you feel dizzy or anxious, or during a scheduled time throughout the day to prevent a flare.