Printable Breathing Cards

Seven patterns on one page: the counts, when to use each, the cautions, and a code to the timer that paces it. Free to print, copy and hand out.

Georges Rayess — writes and maintains Help Me Breathe. Not a clinician.

Published 2026-11-06 · Updated 2026-11-06

4-7-8 breathing

In 4 · Hold 7 · Out 8

One breath 19 s · about 3 a minute

Use it for: Winding down before sleep. Four rounds, lying down, once or twice a day.

Careful: The seven-count hold: shorten or skip it if it strains. Not for a panic attack.

helpmebreath.com/4-7-8-breathing

Box breathing

In 4 · Hold 4 · Out 4 · Hold 4

One breath 16 s · about 4 a minute

Use it for: Steadying yourself before something: a meeting, an exam, a hard call. Two to five minutes.

Careful: Two holds a cycle. If you live with panic attacks, shorten the empty hold or use extended exhale.

helpmebreath.com/box-breathing

Heart coherence

In 5 · Out 5

One breath 10 s · 6 a minute

Use it for: A long, even sit: five to twenty minutes. The pace most slow-breathing trials used.

Careful: Nothing is held. The gentlest pattern here; if 5-5 feels rushed, try 5 in and 6 out.

helpmebreath.com/heart-coherence-breathing

Cyclic sighing

In 2 · In 1 · Out 6

One breath 9 s · about 7 a minute

Use it for: A quick reset: one to five minutes. Two sips in through the nose, one long breath out through the mouth.

Careful: No holds. Keep the out-breath slow; stop if you feel light-headed.

helpmebreath.com/cyclic-sighing

Extended exhale

In 4 · Out 6

One breath 10 s · 6 a minute

Use it for: When you are already tense, or before sleep without a hold. Three to ten minutes.

Careful: Nothing is held. The one to choose if holds make you anxious.

helpmebreath.com/extended-exhale-breathing

Triangle breathing

In 3 · Hold 3 · Out 3

One breath 9 s · about 7 a minute

Use it for: First-timers and classrooms. Trace a triangle with a finger, one side per phase. Six laps to start.

Careful: A three-second hold. Skip it for anyone prone to panic.

helpmebreath.com/triangle-breathing

Energizing breath

In 2 · Out 1, fast

One breath 3 s · 20 a minute

Use it for: Waking up: one to two minutes, seated, then back to normal breathing.

Careful: Can make you faint. Never in water, standing or driving. Not if pregnant, prone to panic, or with a heart, blood pressure, seizure or breathing condition.

helpmebreath.com/energizing-breath

Before any of them

- Sit or lie down. Never while driving, cycling, standing for the fast pattern, or in or near water.
- Stop if you feel dizzy, light-headed, tingly or short of breath, and breathe normally.
- Ask a clinician before practising breath-holds if you are pregnant, or live with a heart condition, uncontrolled high blood pressure, epilepsy, asthma or COPD, glaucoma, or have had surgery recently.
- If you live with panic attacks, use the patterns with no hold: extended exhale, cyclic sighing, heart coherence.
- Slow breathing settles the body for a few minutes. It is not a treatment and does not replace one. If a symptom is new, severe or getting worse, see a doctor.

Breathing cards by Georges Rayess, Help Me Breathe (helpmebreath.com), who is not a clinician. Licence CC BY 4.0: print, copy, share and adapt, keeping this credit. Version 2026-11-06.