

The Exhale

A two-minute reset for pressure

You cannot order a nervous system to calm down. Under pressure the body runs an old threat program, and it does not take instructions from the thinking brain. But it does respond to one thing you control directly. The breath, and in particular the breath out. A long exhale tells the body, underneath thought, that it is safe. What follows is the simplest, most portable version of that idea. Two minutes, no equipment, anywhere.

The reset

- 1 Notice**
Name the pressure in a single word, and feel where it sits in the body. You are not fixing it. You are turning toward it instead of away.
- 2 Make the out-breath longer than the in-breath**
Breathe in gently for a count of four. Breathe out, slowly, for a count of six or eight. The ratio matters more than the exact numbers. The long exhale is the signal.
- 3 Stay with it for about two minutes**
Six to eight breaths is usually enough. Let the exhale be the main event each time, and let the inhale simply happen on its own.
- 4 Anchor it**
As you breathe out, say one line to yourself. *The exhale is safety.* The body learns through repetition, so use the same cue every time until it becomes automatic.

When to use it. In the last two minutes before the talk, the meeting, the hard conversation, the start line. In the middle of the night when the worry arrives. Any moment the pressure is climbing and you want a say in what your body does next.

Done often enough, in the right moments, calm stops being a mood you wait for and becomes a response you can call on. That is the whole idea behind my keynotes and the SURRENDRA method. This page is a place to start.

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