



**WORKING WITH  
MY ANXIETY  
PACK**



1 IN 4



REVOLUTIONARIES

# ANXIETY WORK SHEET

## WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a mental and physical reaction to a perceived threat. A little anxiety and stress is normal and can be helpful. However when anxiety levels are high and you find yourself in a “Fight, Flight or Freeze” that impacts on how you cope with the situation then it can be debilitating and you might need to take steps to reduce the anxiety

## WHAT IS A TRIGGER

A trigger, is a perceived threat causes a strong fight, flight or freeze response in you. It could be a smell, a certain phrase, seeing a particular person etc. Your triggers are unique to you.

## HOW CAN I COPE WITH ANXIETY

There are ways to cope and lessen the intensity of the response to the trigger(s) and it is about finding what works best for you. It can help to practise some of the skills before you are in a situation where you are “triggered”

## TRY AND IDENTIFY YOUR TRIGGERS

Keep a diary or journal of what makes you feel anxious throughout the day so you can identify the cause or a pattern to gain a better understanding.

## CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

Are the stories you are telling yourself actually accurate? When you are anxious the mind will often only see the worst in the possible outcomes in a situation. This is often magnified by our thoughts about ourselves. Ask yourself what is the evidence for your thoughts and Is this how others perceive you or the situation?

## FOCUS ON BREATHING

When you are feeling anxious the body will often respond causing you to take quick shallow breaths. By slowing your breathing down and taking deeper 'belly' breaths it helps restore you to a calmer state.

## **TAKE TIME OUT/UNPLUG/SWITCH OFF**

We often feel the need to keep going all the time and do not give ourselves time to rest. A very good way of reducing anxiety is to take a break from the constant hustle and bustle, switch off the phone, tablets and computer and just enjoy being you, without the constant pressure and stimulus.

## **EXERCISE**

Try to do some form of exercise every day (preferably outdoors to connect with nature), even a quick walk is beneficial as it releases the 'feel good' hormones reducing feelings of stress (stress often makes anxiety worse).

## **SLEEP**

Lack of sleep can make anxiety issues worse so try to get plenty of quality sleep. Practise a routine to enable you to get regular sleep (See Sleep Hygiene Worksheet)

## **PRACTISE GROUNDING**

Be aware of your senses. Name 5 things around you that see, 4 things you can touch, three things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste.

## **TALK TO SOMEONE**

Talking to someone you trust can really help you gain perspective

## **PRACTICE HEALTHY HABITS**

Practices such as Yoga, Tai Chi or Qi-Gong help keep you grounded and re-set you to a calmer and gentler mind set. They aim to give your mind a break from the pressure of everyday life as you focus on breath and movement.

## **EAT A BALANCED DIET**

There is an increasing amount of evidence linking diet to our emotional and mental wellbeing. Where possible reduce the amounts of sugars and caffeine and drink plenty of water

## **MINDFULNESS**

Practice mindfulness which seeks to focus your attention on the present and not on the past, or future possibilities. Taking simple tasks and taking the attention to the little details in the task.

## WHAT IS GROUNDING

In unfamiliar situations or after a trauma, it's normal to experience anxiety, and other uncomfortable symptoms. Grounding techniques help control these symptoms by turning attention away from thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing on the present moment.

Grounding uses simple strategies that can help you refocus away from emotional pain to your surroundings

Grounding anchors you and gives you a chance to calm down and allows you process what is triggering the unpleasant feelings.

Grounding can be used anywhere and at anytime and involve

- Mental techniques focussing on your mind
- Physical techniques using your senses
- Soothing - using talking to yourself in a kind way

## GROUNDING USING MENTAL TECHNIQUES

Use mental exercises to take your mind off uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. They are discreet and easy to use at nearly any time or place. Experiment to see which work best for you.

1. Name what you see in as much detail as possible.
2. In 7's count backwards from 100.
3. Use the names of 5 people and spell each name backwards.
4. Put the letters of your name in alphabetical order.
5. Complete an A to Z of food.
6. Name as many Famous Fictional Characters With R at the beginning of their name.
7. Name as many Famous People (Not Fictional) with A at the beginning of their name.



# GROUNDING TECHNIQUES - BODY AWARENESS

The body awareness technique will bring you into the here-and-now by directing your focus to sensations in the body. Pay special attention to the physical sensations created by each step.

1. Take 5 long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through puckered lips.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.
3. Stomp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.
4. Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.
5. Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.
6. Rub your palms together briskly. Notice and sound and the feeling of warmth.
7. Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for 5 seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.
8. Take 5 more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.



# 5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Be aware of your surroundings.  
Name 5 things you can see.

**5**

**4**

Again from your surroundings  
Name 4 things you can touch.

Thinking of where you are  
Name 3 things you can hear.

**3**

**2**

Again thinking of where you are  
Name 2 things you can smell.

Lastly from your surroundings  
Name 1 thing you can taste.

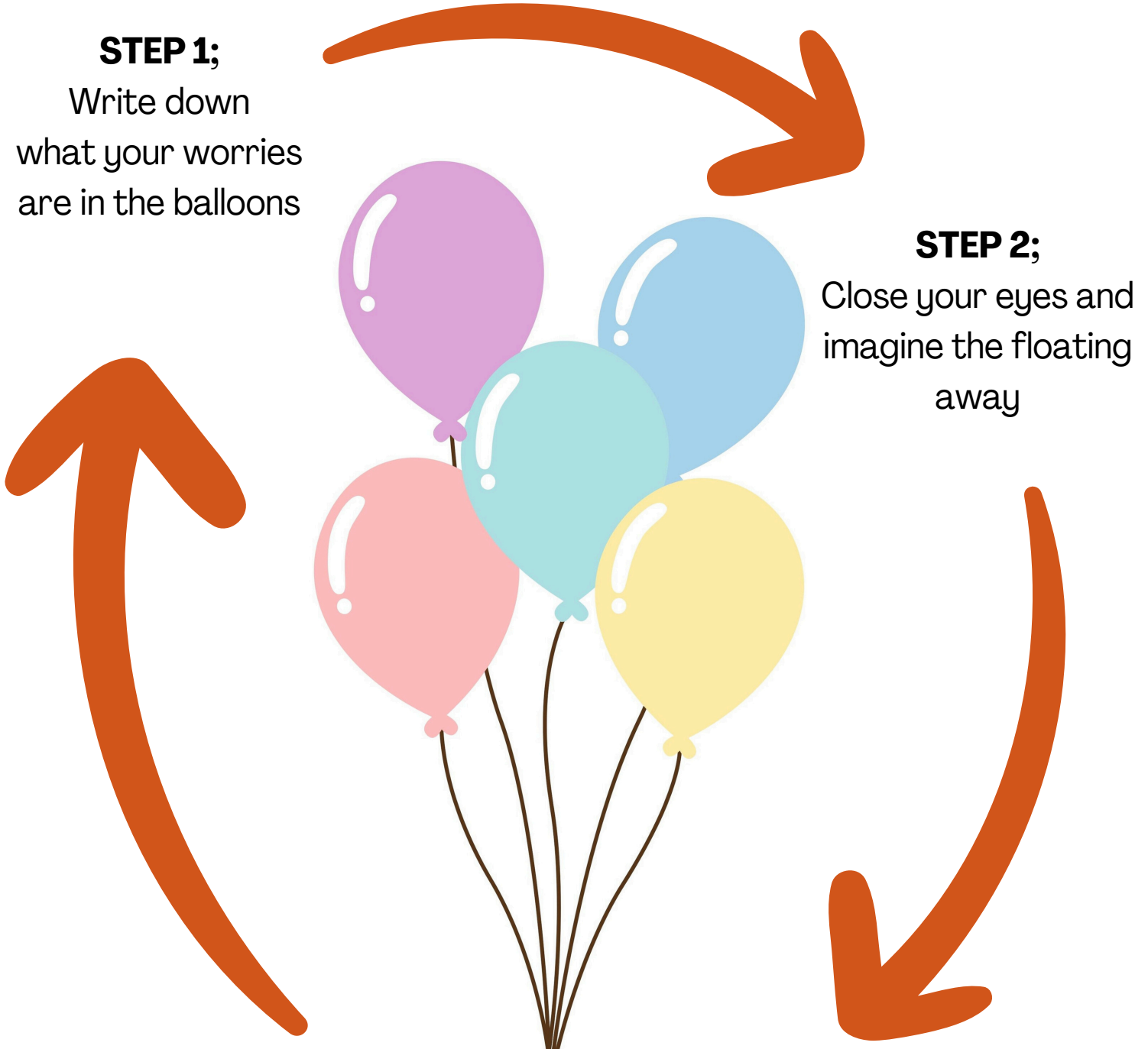
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# THE BALLOON EXERCISE

for when you start to feel anxious or worried

## STEP 1;

Write down  
what your worries  
are in the balloons



## STEP 2;

Close your eyes and  
imagine the floating  
away

## STEP 3;

focus on slowing down your  
breathing taking slow deep  
belly breathes.  
Go back repeat as necessary

# Working with your thoughts and feelings

MY THOUGHTS

I'M FEELING SAD

0 10

I'M FEELING ANXIOUS

0 10

I'M FEELING SCARED

0 10

I'M FEELING ANGRY

0 10

I'M FEELING FRUSTRATED

0 10

HOW AM I FEELING TODAY

WHAT I CAN I DO TO MAKE TODAY A GOOD DAY



# WORKING ON YOUR TRIGGERS

**WHAT HAPPENED RECENTLY**

**WHAT DID IT REMIND YOU  
OF IN THE PAST**

**HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN IT FIRST HAPPENED**

**WHAT DID YOU NEED THEN  
TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION**

**WHAT DO YOU NEED NOW TO  
FEEL SAFE**

The past can sometimes be very painful and little things can instantly transport back to those feelings. You can learn to soothe those feelings and be present in the here and now.

**WHAT SELF-CARE CAN I DO TO SELF-SOOTHE**

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR PHYSICAL RESPONSES TO TRIGGERS

When triggered where do you feel the  
stress and tension?



The physical responses are a result of my emotional stress  
Write down in order, where you feel the stress and how it progresses.

# EXPLORING MY WORRIES

What is your biggest worry?



What is the worse case scenario?



What evidence do you have for this happening?



What evidence do you have for this NOT happening?



What can I do reduce my worries and improve the situation?



# NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

When you are stressed and anxious your mind might seek to find reasons to support the way you are feeling

Examples of this could be;-

***“It is my fault that someone is poorly”***

***“I am a bad person for not being able to do something”.***

***“I am not worthy of love.”***

When these thoughts occur, interrogate the thoughts. Ask yourself are my thoughts based on feelings or facts?

What evidence is there to support those negative thoughts?

Then ask yourself what evidence do I have to counter those negative thoughts?

Will it matter to me tomorrow or next week?

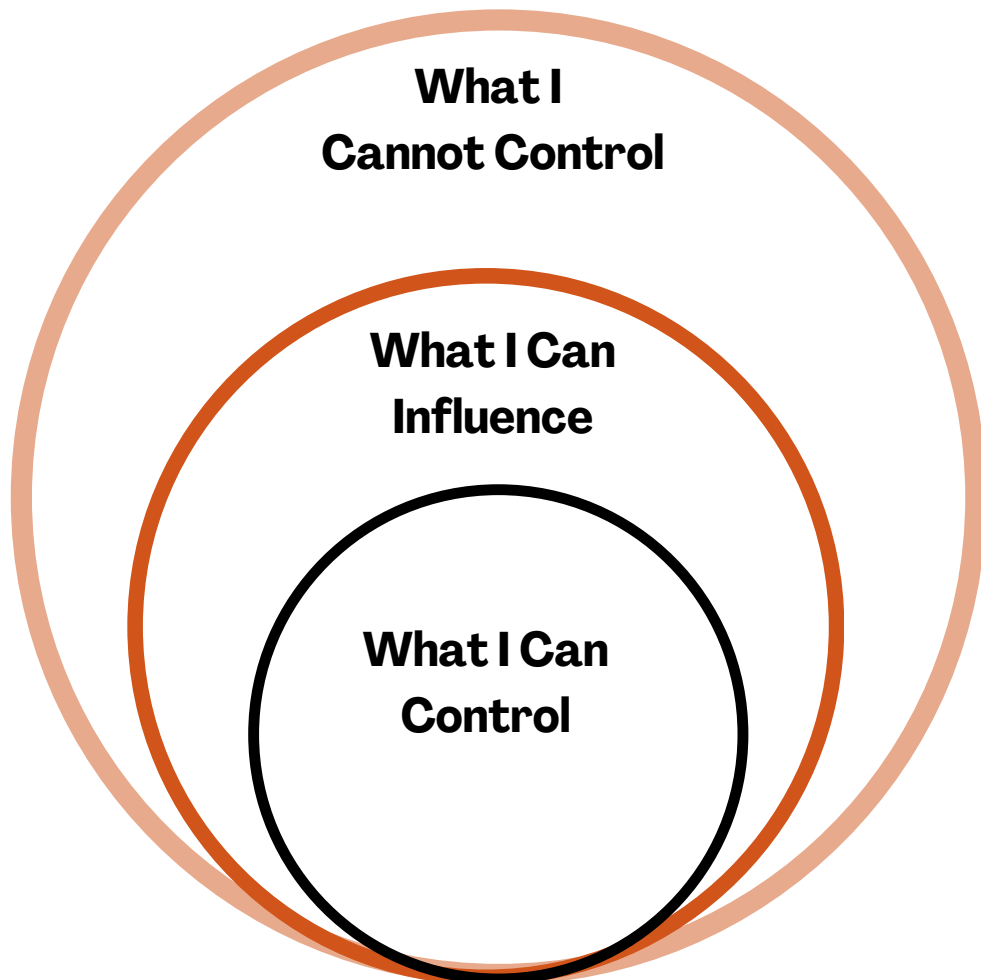
What have I done in the past to calm these negative thoughts?

What can I do now to handle situation in a positive manner?

# CIRCLE OF CONTROL

Sometimes things can cause us worry or stress. Use this circle of control activity to think about what you can and can't control so that you can learn to worry less.

- **The Outside Ring:** This is where you put the things that are out of your control, things that you can't do anything about
- **The Middle Ring:** This is where you put the things that you may have some influence over but they are not fully in your control.
- **The Inner Ring:** This is where you put the things that you can control, things that you can change if you need to.



# NEGATIVE THOUGHTS - STOP TECHNIQUE

## S = STOP

**Stop.** In this first it is important to take a pause and recognise that there are strong emotions involved which could negatively impact on how you react to the situation. Do not react straight away.

## T = TAKE A BREATH

**Breathe.** Focus on your breathing. Slow your breathing down. Take slower deeper breathes. Draw your attention to the rhythm of your breathing.

## O = OBSERVE

**Observe.** Focus on your emotions. What are you feeling? Then observe your physical responses. Is your heart racing, sweaty palms etc. Finally turn your attention to your thoughts. Where do they come from and are they true?

## P = PROCEED WISELY

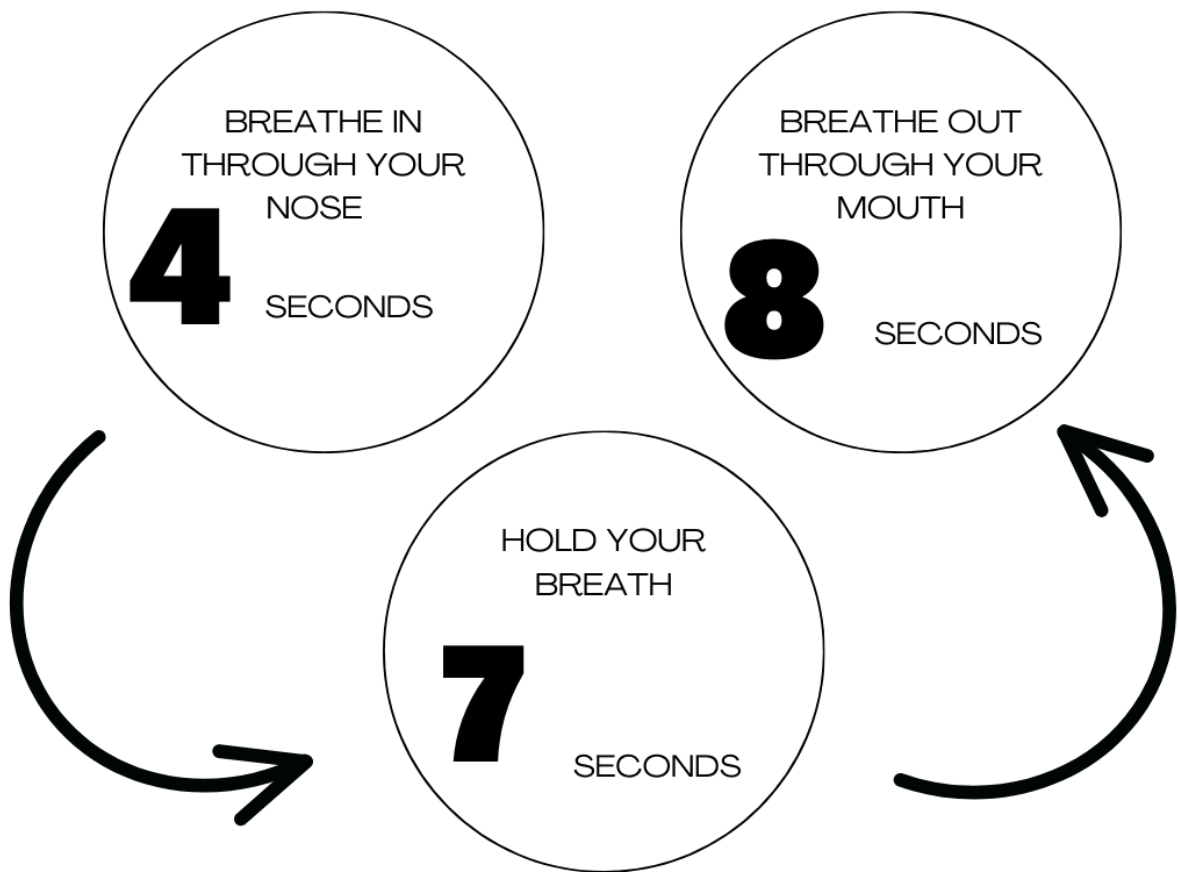
**Proceed wisely.** Using your insight from understanding your emotions, physical reactions and where your thoughts come from, proceed with the course of action you determine will help you move forward positively.



# FOCUSING ON BREATHING

## 4-7-8 BREATHING TECHNIQUE

This breathing technique can aid relaxation and calm racing thoughts. start by sitting or lying in a comfortable position



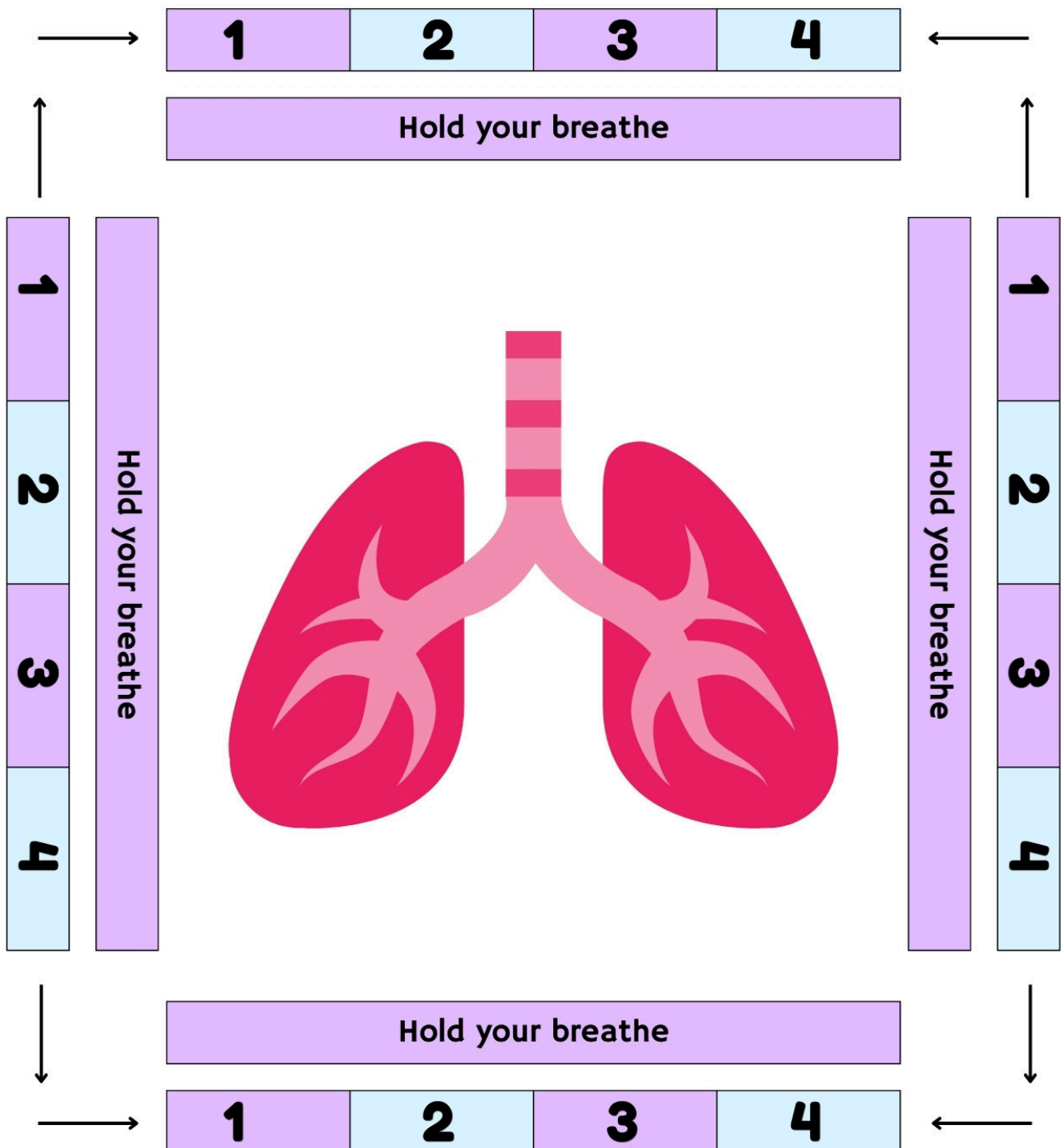
**REPEAT TECHNIQUE 4 TIMES.**

Any breathing technique is best practised before times of great stress and anxiety, and whilst you are not doing anything that requires concentration. learning breathing techniques might leave you feeling light headed until you are used to using it.

If you feel light headed try halving the time and slowly build up to 4-7-8

# SQUARE BREATHING

Focus on your breathing and count to four.  
Recognise, your breathing slowing, your thoughts  
slowing, your body relaxing



# BELLY BREATHING

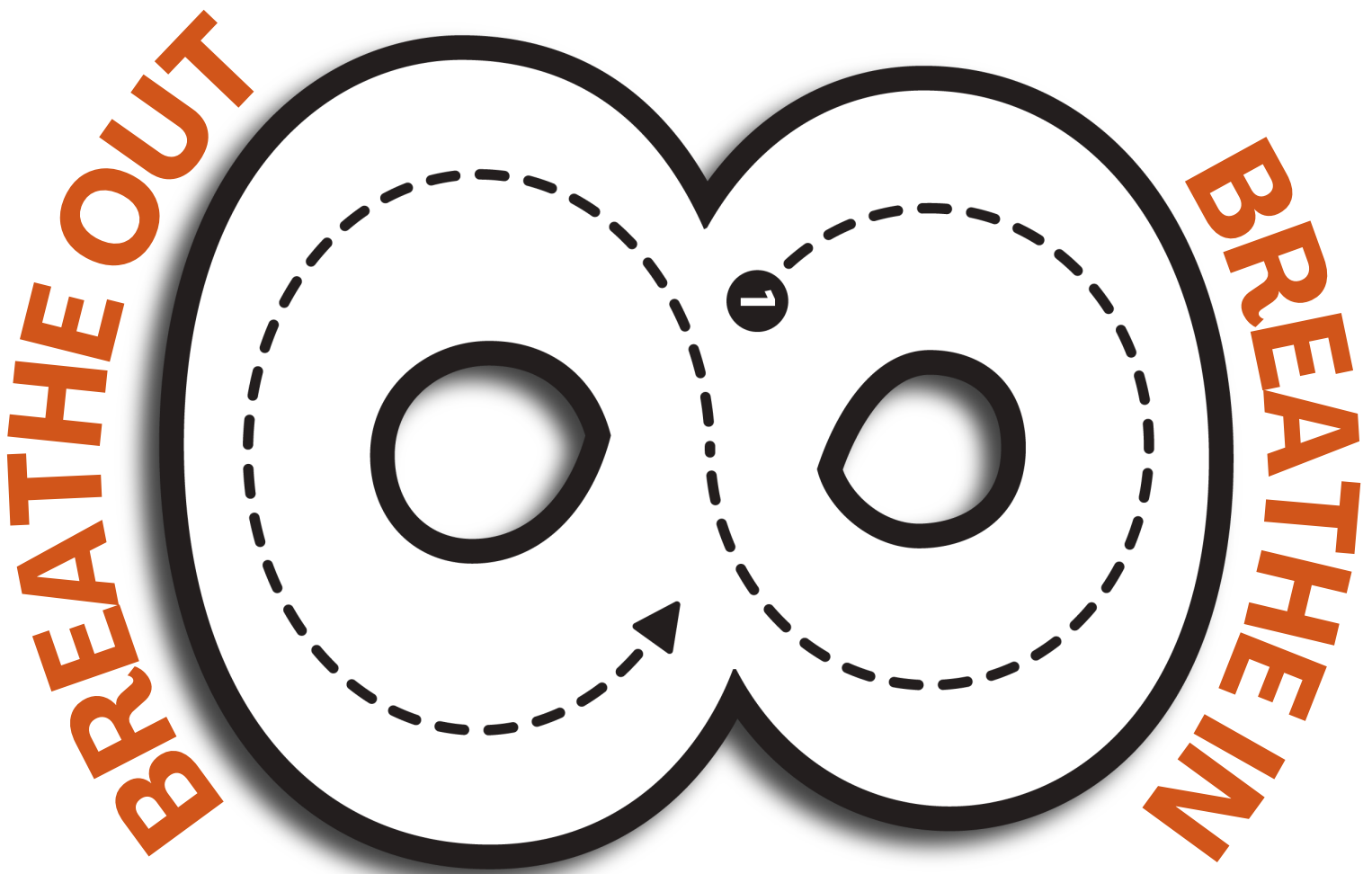
## ALSO KNOWN AS DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

- Position one hand on your chest and the other just beneath your ribcage.
- Take a gradual breath in through your nostrils, notice the air travelling downwards towards your abdomen.
- Your belly should expand and protrude outward while your chest stays relatively stable.
- Slowly exhale for a few seconds. Notice the difference between the air in the abdomen and the air in the chest



# LAZY 8 BREATHING

Starting at the number 1 using your finger trace the number eight, taking a slow deep breath in



As you cross over to the other side of the lazy eight, slowly breathe out

Repeat the process until you feel calmer

# BODY RELAXATION

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

By tensing and relaxing the muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you spot anxiety by teaching you to recognise feelings of muscle tension.

### LET'S START

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. For each area of the body listed below, you will tense your muscles tightly, but not to the point of strain. Hold the tension for 10 seconds, and pay close attention to how it feels. Then, release the tension, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the feeling of tension.

**Feet** Curl your toes tightly into your feet, then release them.

**Calves** Point or flex your feet, then let them relax.

**Thighs** Squeeze your thighs together tightly, then let them relax.

**Torso** Suck in your abdomen, then release the tension and let it fall.

**Back** Squeeze your shoulder blades together, then release them.

**Shoulders** Lift and squeeze your shoulders toward your ears, then let them drop.

**Arms** Make fists and squeeze them toward your shoulders, then let them drop.

**Hands** Make a fist by curling your fingers into your palm, then relax your fingers.

**Face** Scrunch your facial features to the centre of your face, then relax.

**Full Body** Squeeze all muscles together, then release all tension.