

Simple Breathing Exercise Effective in Reducing Anxiety and Improving Mood, Researchers Say

WASHINGTON, DC, March 23, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New research has found that a simple controlled-breathing exercise, done for five minutes a day, is an effective way to reduce anxiety and improve mood.

Researchers from the Stanford University School of Medicine [investigated](#) whether deliberate patterns of breathing for as little as five minutes per day could relieve anxiety and improve well-being. Study participants were divided into three groups, each with a different daily breathing exercise. The exercises differed in the duration and intensity of the inhales and exhales. A fourth group focused awareness on their natural breathing, a practice called mindfulness.

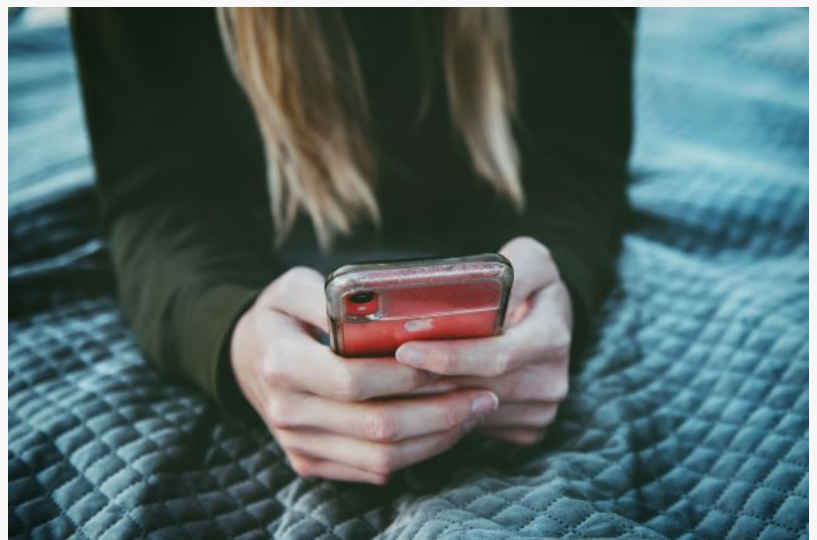


Researchers found that inhaling through the nose, inhaling again even more deeply to fully fill the lungs, then slowly and fully exhaling through the mouth for 5 minutes daily can relieve anxiety and improve well-being.

All three breathing patterns were found to reduce anxiety and improve well-being over the 28 days of the study. All three exercises were also more effective in reducing anxiety than mindfulness. The positive benefit for the participants increased with the number of days they performed the exercises. The most improvement resulted from the exercise that researchers called "cyclic sighing," with its extended exhales. It is done by inhaling through the nose, inhaling again even more deeply to fully fill the lungs, then slowly and fully exhaling through the mouth.

"Daily 5-minute cyclic sighing has promise as an effective stress management exercise," according to David Spiegel, M.D., professor of psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine and an author of the study, published in *Cell Reports Medicine*.

It is not known exactly how controlled breathing reduces anxiety. Among the possible explanations the researchers suggest is the simple fact that the participants felt good about doing something themselves to relieve their anxiety. "Voluntary breathing exercises can...enhance the general sense of control over one's internal state, contributing to the increase in positive affect observed," wrote Spiegel.



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Other non-drug approaches, such as increasing physical activity and decreasing the amount of time spent on social media, are also known to reduce anxiety. Research has found that exercise is protective against developing anxiety and effective in significantly reducing the symptoms of anxiety. Other research found that limiting the amount of time spent on social media to 30 minutes a day for three weeks significantly decreased anxiety symptoms and improved well-being.

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David Spiegel, M.D., Stanford University School of Medicine

These natural approaches to reducing anxiety stand in stark contrast to the sedatives (benzodiazepines) and other anti-anxiety drugs commonly prescribed for anxiety. There are at least 79 research studies showing that anti-anxiety drugs can cause harmful side effects, including increased risk of death, fractures, heart problems, cognitive impairment, amnesia, dementia, impaired driving, sleepwalking, insomnia, depression, hallucinations,

aggression, homicidal ideation, suicide – and even anxiety. (For a list of these studies, search for "antianxiety" at www.cchrnt.org/psychdrugdangers/ and scroll down to see the drug studies.)

WARNING: Anyone wishing to discontinue or change the dose of an antianxiety or other psychiatric drug is cautioned to do so only under the supervision of a physician because of potentially dangerous withdrawal symptoms.

Anxiety and other unwanted emotional and behavioral symptoms can have physical causes. Unless properly diagnosed, the symptoms could be misdiagnosed and incorrectly treated as a psychiatric disorder. To identify any physical causes, the Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) recommends a complete physical examination with lab tests, nutritional and allergy screenings, and a review of all current medications.

CCHR continues to raise public awareness of the risks of serious side effects and withdrawal symptoms from antianxiety and other psychiatric drugs, so that consumers and their physicians can make fully informed decisions about starting or stopping the drugs. CCHR supports safe and science-based non-drug approaches to mental health.

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights was co-founded in 1969 by members of the Church of Scientology and the late psychiatrist and humanitarian Thomas Szasz, M.D., recognized by many academics as modern psychiatry's most authoritative critic, to eradicate abuses and restore human rights and dignity to the field of mental health. CCHR has been instrumental in obtaining 228 laws against psychiatric abuses and violations of human rights worldwide.



CCHR recommends a complete physical examination with lab tests, nutritional and allergy screenings, and a review of current medications to identify any physical causes of anxiety, which otherwise could be misdiagnosed and incorrectly treated as a psychiatric disorder.

The CCHR National Affairs Office in Washington, DC, has advocated for mental health rights and protections at the state and federal level. The CCHR traveling exhibit, which has toured 441 major cities worldwide and educated over 800,000 people on the history to the present day of abusive and racist psychiatric practices, has been displayed at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, and at other locations.

Anne Goedeke

Citizens Commission on Human Rights, National Affairs Office

+1 202-349-9267

[email us here](#)

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