

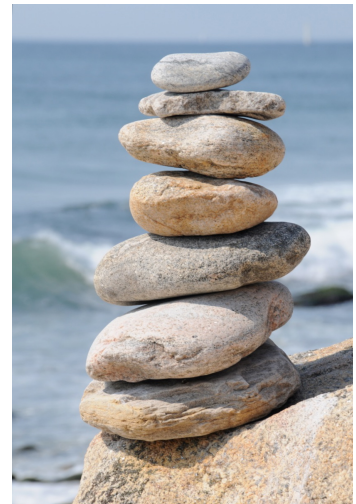
The 3-Minute Breathing Space

The following exercise is a portable, “instant meditation” to help you access a calm, clear presence in the face of daily stressors.

1. Awareness

Sit or stand comfortably, and, if possible, close your eyes. Ask yourself: “What is my inner experience right now?”

- What **body sensations** am I experiencing? Notice areas of tension.
- What **emotions** are present? Acknowledge and experience them without trying to change them, even if they are unpleasant.
- What **thoughts** are going through the mind?



Allow space for each experience for a few moments, **even if it is unwanted.**

2. Gathering

Gently direct your attention to the physical sensations of your breath. Follow the breath all the way in and all the way out. Notice the sensations and movement in your abdomen. It may be useful to start with a few deep breaths, allowing the belly to be soft as it expands on the inhalation, and recedes on the exhalation. Then, let go of controlling the breath, and allow the body to breathe by itself. Follow the breath all the way in and all the way out, using each breath as an opportunity to anchor yourself in the present. When the mind wanders, gently bring the attention back to the breath. Tune into the quiet, non-reactive part of you that is witnessing your experiences.

3. Expanding

Broaden the field of your awareness around your breathing so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, including posture and facial expression. If you sense tension or discomfort, breath into it as you soften and open. Just feel the whole body here, breathing.

When you are ready, allow the eyes to open and take in your surroundings. Open to your peripheral vision. Notice the effects of this short meditation. Practice often, and it will become your natural “go to” during times of stress.