

## ANXIETY FIRST AID

This is a version of a breath exercise called “Four Square Breathing.” There are four parts—inhale, hold the breath in, exhale, hold the breath out—with each part lasting about four seconds.

By doing this exercise, you slow your breath cycle to about four breaths per minute, down from the usual 12-20 breaths per minute. This activates the parasympathetic (rest and digest) part of your nervous system. If possible, breathe through your nose.

First, place your hands on your low belly. Inhale so deeply that the low belly seems to expand. As you exhale, allow the belly to relax. Take a few breaths like this.

Then,

As you **inhale** for about four seconds, say to yourself “**I am**”

As you **hold** your breath in for four seconds, say to yourself “**okay.**”

As you **exhale** for about four seconds, say to yourself “**I am**”

As you **hold** your breath out for four seconds, say to yourself “**okay.**”

Continue for a few minutes.