



HOW DOES DEEP BREATHING HELP YOU TO FEEL RELAXED?

Sympathetic Nervous System

You may have heard of the 'Fight or Flight' response, the Parasympathetic Nervous System is simply the opposite of that. 'Fight or Flight' is the term for the activation of the **Sympathetic Nervous System**, instead of getting you ready for action, deep breathing activates a natural bodily response that can be described as 'rest and digest'.

- Breathing techniques produce a bodily response that **lowers anxiety** in a very physical way.
- Deep breathing techniques have one thing in common, they work by stimulating what is known as the **Parasympathetic Nervous System**.
- **Out-breaths** decrease blood pressure, dilate your pupils and slow your heart rate lowering emotional arousal in the process.
- Practicing a breathing technique a **few times a day** will lower your overall stress levels in the long term.
- It's important to realise that it's the **out-breaths that stimulate the response**, so a breathing technique with longer out-breaths than in-breaths will be more effective at lowering emotional arousal.
- Breathing techniques in which the out-breath is the same length as the in-breath, or during which you focus on your anxious thoughts **are generally less effective** at quickly lowering the physical symptoms of anxiety, despite being a good way of being mindful or entering into a relaxed state.

