



**THOUGHT OF
THE MONTH**



**ANNOUNCING
NEW DONORS
THIS MONTH**

- 3129 - Native American, Mexican
- 5508- Caucasian – German, Native American, Irish, Scottish
- 91000 - Dominican
- 92006 - African American

A Simple Breathing Exercise to Cope with Infertility Anxiety

With infertility, there are so many things out of our control. The breath is something we can use to feel empowered and in control. As we deal with infertility, we often spend a lot of time googling fertility information, searching for what we can do or change. We get stuck in negative thought patterns that make us anxious. Sometimes we can get so stressed that we hyperventilate or have panic attacks.

The breath is a built-in regulator. The simple act of breathing can relax, release, and free you or it can constrict and suffocate you.

Being mindful of your breathing can change your body's responses physically, psychologically, and emotionally. Calm breathing can be an anchor, bringing you back to the present moment and centering your mind. It can trigger the parasympathetic nervous system, slowing a panicked heart-beat, lowering your blood pressure, relaxing your muscles.

This idea of catching or controlling your breath may seem far-fetched. I was doubtful at first, as are many of my clients. But, once I started the process and kept at it, I became a true believer. Breathing exercises carried me through my IVF treatment, and later, my pregnancy with twins. To get a sense of the simple power of breath control, here is one example—the 4-7-8 Breathing Technique, also known as “The Relaxing Breath.” This is an excellent way to self-soothe the mind and body, and it's easy to learn.

Both Buddhist and Hindu yoga traditions feature meditation and breathing practices. This breathing

technique is based on “pranayama,” an ancient Indian yoga practice that signifies “regulation of breath.”

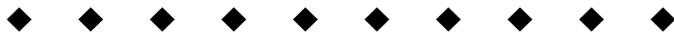
To start, get comfortable either sitting or lying down. You can look forward at one spot with a gentle gaze or close your eyes. Begin the breathing exercise.

- Gently place one hand on your lower belly and the other on your chest.
- Take a slow breath in from deep inside your belly. Feel the belly rise, while in your mind you count to 4.
- Hold the breath inside, and silently count to 7.
- Now release it, breathing out completely as you count to 8. Try to get all the air out of your lungs. Notice your belly deflate. Make a quiet whoosh sound as you exhale. Repeat the exercise three times or until you feel calmer.

You can do this at home or anywhere, if you find yourself in a highly anxious state. Go to a bathroom or other private space, or if that's not an option, try this wherever you are, even in a doctor's office or on the subway.

Catching your breath is so important when you're upset or stressed. It doesn't change the circumstances, but it may reduce your suffering by changing how you react to what's happening during your fertility journey, or any challenging situation.

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