COVID-19 (coronavirus)

# Helping You Relax– Box Breathing Exercise

We understand that this is a stressful time and want to support you in coping with stress and focusing on wellness. One exercise that you can use to help de-stress is the box breathing exercise.

Use the box breathing exercise when:

- Churning thoughts are keeping you awake at night
- You're dwelling on a stressful event like an argument
- You're angry, fearful, or otherwise about to lose your cool

Here's how to do it:

1. **Inhale for a count of four.**
2. **Hold for a count of four.**
3. **Exhale for a count of four.**
4. **Wait for a count of four.**
5. **Repeat until you feel calm and centered again.**
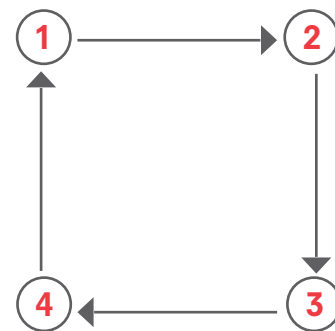
If it helps, you can trace your finger in a square pattern while you breathe. Or you can close your eyes and visualize traveling around your square. Pairing the breathing with visualization will take your mind off of the stressful situation and help you focus inward.

When your lungs expand slowly, the vagus nerve picks up on the expansion and signals the release of acetylcholine, which tells your heart to slow down. A slowed heart rate calms your entire nervous system.

Visit **mountnittany.org/coronavirus** for the most up-to-date information.