BREATH HARBOR / ORIGINAL PRACTICE

3-minute breathing space script

A three-step pause for work breaks and transitions. Natural breathing or feet-on-floor anchor.

Step 1: Noticing what is here (about one minute)

Pause for a moment in whatever chair or space you are using. Let your hands rest on your lap or desk, and feel your feet on the floor. You can keep your eyes open and let your gaze settle on a neutral spot.

Ask yourself quietly: "What is happening right now?" Notice any thoughts or plans that are still running from the last task, without trying to solve them or push them away. Notice the general mood or tone of the moment—whether you feel rushed, tired, neutral, or alert. Notice one or two physical sensations, such as tight shoulders or the support of the chair. You are not trying to fix anything in this first minute; you are simply stepping out of autopilot and taking stock.

Step 2: Gathering attention (about one minute)

Now narrow your attention to a single, steady anchor in the present moment. If it feels comfortable, follow the natural movement of three or four ordinary breaths as air enters and leaves your body. Leave the pace and depth of your breathing alone; there is nothing to count or hold.

If focusing on your breath feels tense or distracting, gather your attention at the soles of your feet against the floor or the contact of your hands resting on your lap. Whenever your mind jumps back to your task list, gently bring your attention back to that single anchor for a few seconds more.

Step 3: Widening attention (about one minute)

In the final minute, let your attention expand outward from that single anchor to include your whole seated posture—your feet, legs, back, shoulders, and hands—and the wider room around you.

Notice the light in the room, the furniture nearby, and any ordinary background sounds. Allow your breath and body to feel part of this larger space rather than tightly focused on one problem. Before you return to your schedule, choose one small, manageable next step, and carry on with your day when you are ready.

BEFORE YOU PRACTICE

Use this script at your own pace

1. Pause in a safe, supported seat—such as at your desk between tasks or before a meeting. Keep your eyes open or softly lowered.
2. Spend roughly one minute on each of the three steps below, without watching the clock too closely.
3. Let your breathing stay completely natural during the middle step; do not force deep breaths or add breath holds.
4. Substitute the feeling of your feet on the floor or a nearby sound if paying attention to your breath feels uncomfortable.
5. Finish by looking around the room and choosing one concrete next action.

This page provides the written script and a printable PDF handout. If you want to listen to a three-minute spoken version with an AI-generated voice, open our mindfulness exercises guide, or time a quiet pause with the meditation timer.

Who should be careful

Even a three-minute pause can occasionally make you more aware of fatigue, restlessness, or anxious sensations. Stop at any time if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, disconnected, or more distressed, and shift your attention to visible objects in the room.

Do not practice while driving or operating equipment. If you are pregnant or have asthma, COPD, or a heart or lung condition, keep your breathing completely natural and unforced. Persistent anxiety, depression, or overwhelm deserves support from a doctor or mental health professional.

NIH / NCCIH: Evidence and safety overview

Permission and source

Original script by Cheng Xu, Breath Harbor. Free for personal and noncommercial group use with credit to Breath Harbor. Commercial sale or redistribution is not included.

General wellbeing information, not medical advice. AI-assisted text, checked against linked sources. The web page includes evidence limits and references.

breathharbor.com/scripts/three-minute-breathing-space

Updated 2026-11-04