

TECHNIQUES

MODULE 4:

CONTROL

ANIMAL

INSTINCTS

1. Awareness of Breath and Senses Meditation (audio recording)
2. Coherent/Resonant Breathing
3. Breathing and Vision
4. Box Breathing (Square Breathing)
5. Breathing and Vision, 60-Second Relaxation

Instructions Module 4:

1. You are learning to regulate your nervous system. Bring awareness to your “Window of Tolerance”. Investigate.
2. Practice “Awareness of Breath and Senses Meditation” once a day.
3. Do the Coherent Breathing 1-3 times a day. You can also combine it with other meditation practices.
4. Practice “Box Breathing” once a day. Best before sleeping.
5. Practice “Breath and Vision” once a day. Practice them separately and then together. Pay attention to how you feel and then set the intention (up-regulate or downregulate the internal state) depending on what’s needed.
6. Practice the “60-Second Relaxation” exercise when you

1. Awareness of Breath and Senses Meditation (audio recording)

Being with the Awareness of Breath, Body, and Senses Meditation will deepen the embodiment of mindfulness. We are doing this exercise as a formal practice with the audio recording or informal short practice throughout the day. We are turning into the senses, breath, body, sounds, thoughts, and emotions - whatever is present. It is by noticing these feelings without judgement, that we can directly recognize that we are able to deliberately cultivate a continuity of awareness throughout the day. This is only a beginning of accessing our innate resources for coping and meeting

life in ways that are less conditioned and more appropriate to situations we face.

We are practicing moving out of “**doing**” mode into “**being**” mode of mind. Anchoring in the felt sense of each present moment through the senses, the breath, and body sensations. Cultivating being fully with the experience of the present moment.

2. Coherent Breathing/Resonant Breathing/HRV Practice:

How long does it take?

5 minutes duration

3 times per day

6 breaths per minute

Key Steps/Guidelines:

Heart rate variability practice

Make your in-breaths and your out-breaths last for five seconds each. There is an imperceptible pause between inhales and exhales. In this way, you create heart coherence and heart resonance. Sit straight and strong, but relaxed and at ease. It's easier to breath fully and freely, and to create heart coherence, if you are sitting or standing upright.

Create a conscious intention before each session. State it as an affirmation, an assertion, a command, or a prayer. For example: "I am strengthening my ability to survive and thrive!" Or "Every conscious breath makes me stronger, healthier, and more alive!"

Breathe in for five seconds: through your nose, focusing on sending the breath low into your belly. (It's okay to breathe in through your mouth if that feels more comfortable, interesting, or enjoyable.)

Breathe out for five seconds: through your nose, or perhaps through pursed lips as if you are blowing through a straw to make bubbles in your drink, or by making a shhhh sound. Some people like to hum on the exhale.

That also works beautifully. Do what feels comfortable or enjoyable.

Be fully mindful of each breath when you practice. Focus 100 percent on the subtle sensations breathing. It is not a thinking process; it is a feeling process. This is how we access our unconscious autonomic system and take control of so-called involuntary functions.

Do your first five-minute practice session as soon as you wake up in the morning, before doing anything else (except perhaps using the toilet). Do this first session before drinking coffee or having breakfast. It is the most important session of the day. Make it a priority.

Do your second five-minute session about four hours later, just before lunch. This midday session clears away stress and rebalances the nervous system after a hectic morning. It also prepares your system for digestion, and it helps prevent afternoon drowsiness.

To reinforce the breathing signal, focus on your heart. You can also put your hand(s) over your heart. Focus on positive emotions, wonderful images, and powerful intentions.

Do this practice before an important meeting or activity, to calm and focus yourself, and to prepare physiologically. Do it when you become emotional, upset, or offended.

Breathing resonant frequency helps not only you, it influences the hearts of those who are close to you.

3. Breathing and Vision

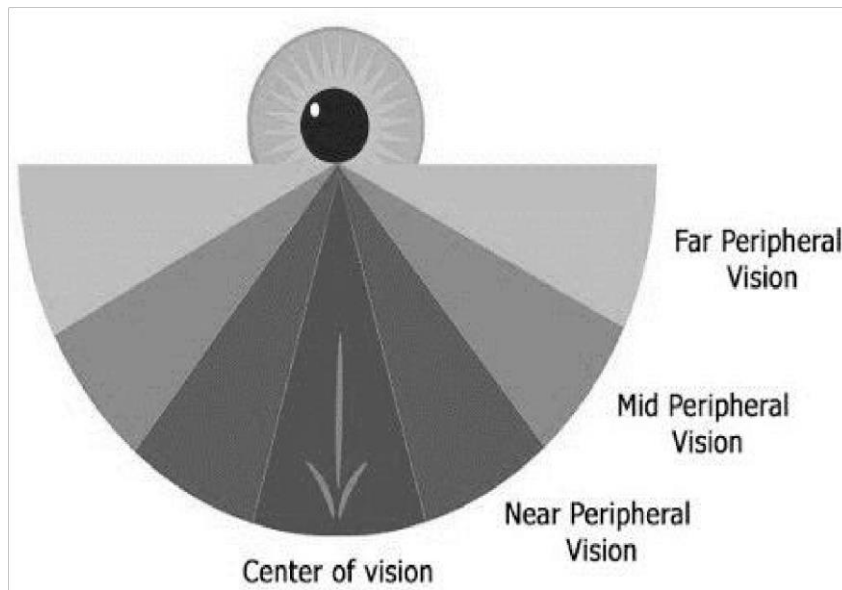
Breathing and vision are two functions we can voluntarily influence. We can up-regulate or down-regulate our nervous system and change our internal states with that.

Peripheral Vision/Panoramic Vision/Soft Gaze: The ability to see objects and movement outside of the direct line of vision. It's about paying attention to what's happening at the edges – the periphery – of your field of vision. If you try it for a moment in an environment where things or people are moving, you'll notice some differences from normal foveal vision. You may become more aware of movement. At the edges of your vision, you may be less aware of color and contrast distinctions.

What is Peripheral Vision?

Very often in modern life we see things with a kind of mild tunnel vision, where we are very focused on one thing and ignore everything else. Think of when you watch TV and you don't really notice the rest of the room; or using a computer, whether for work or play, where the screen becomes the only thing that's real; or reading or writing, where we only really see the page. Even talking to people, we tend to focus on their eyes and faces and ignore the rest of them. This kind of tunnel vision or **"foveal" vision** also seems to go with an inner tunnel vision, where we get obsessed or fixated on something and lose context. It goes along with worry, obsession, fixation, and also seems correlated with rushing around and the arousal of the sympathetic nervous system, producing adrenaline and other stress chemicals.

Peripheral vision is the opposite. It's about paying attention to what's happening at the edges – the periphery – of your field of vision. If you try it for a moment in an environment where things or people are moving, you'll notice some differences from normal foveal vision. You may become more aware of movement. At the edges of your vision, you may be less aware of color and contrast distinctions.



You could experiment for a moment now by lifting a hand up to the side of your face and waggling your fingers. If you gradually move your hand back, you'll find a point where you can see the fingers when they are waggling, but not when they are still (this is how creatures such as frogs and geckos see everything). This is the very periphery of your vision.

Soft gaze: With soft eyes, you let your eyes physically relax. Instead of focusing on one thing, you allow that thing to be at the center of your gaze, while simultaneously taking in the largest possible expanse within your full field of vision. This includes peripheral vision both to the left and right, as well as above and below. You are yourself, while having a global view that is around you.

Foveal Vision: Tunnel vision with a narrow focus on one object. It is the focus of the center in the field of vision.

1. Vision:

Peripheral vision/panoramic vision/soft-gaze decreases our autonomic arousal levels. We de-focus and calm down. It lowers vigilance.

Foveal Vision/tunnel vision/central vision increases our autonomic arousal levels. It heightens vigilance.

2. Breathing:

Inhale emphasized breathing (you should be inhaling twice as long as you exhale, ratio of 2:1) which increases the arousal level of the autonomic nervous system.

Exhale emphasized breathing (you should be exhaling twice as long as you inhale, ratio of 2:1) decreases the arousal level of the autonomic nervous system.

3. Vision and Breathing:

We can bring vision and breathing pattern together to regulate our nervous system and with that, our internal states.

To induce our **calm, relaxed state**:

Soft gaze and long exhale

To induce a **focused state**:

Foveal vision (central vision, visual narrowing) and long inhale

How long does it take? 3-15 min

Key Steps/Guidelines:

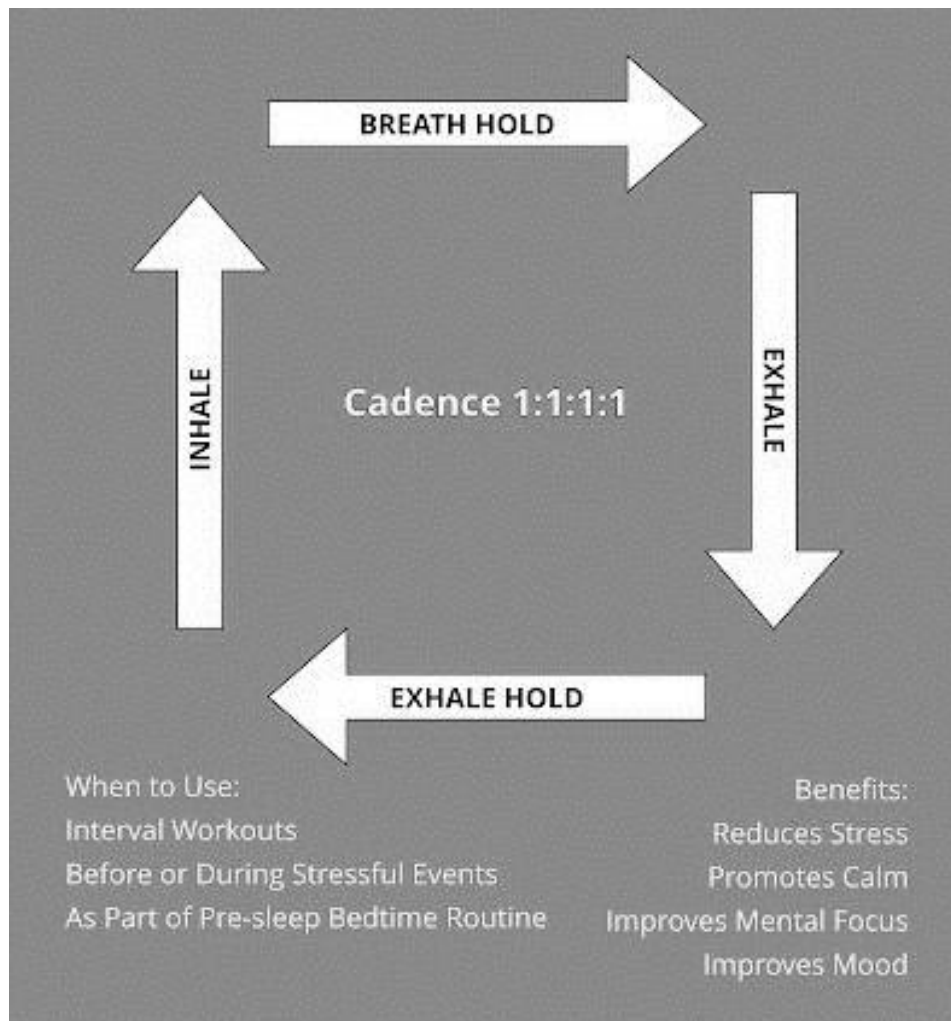
- Center yourself.
- You can do just the breathing or just the vision exercise to train both separately.
- Breathing: Sit or stand upright, not too tight, take natural breaths, not forcing anything. Try to breath in your abdomen and not so much into your chest. You can breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Bring awareness to your breaths. Now do the inhale emphasized breathing if you want to increase your arousal levels and the exhale emphasized breathing if you want to decrease your arousal levels.
- Vision: Sit or stand upright, look int front of you. Now activate the central vision to increase your arousal level or activate your peripheral vision to decrease your arousal level.
- Vision and breathing together: Activate your vision - peripheral vision is for decreasing the arousal level and central vision is for increasing the arousal level. Breathing pattern - exhale emphasized for decreasing arousal level and inhale emphasized for increasing arousal level.
- Support the exercise with the mental act of widen and narrowing your field of awareness.

4. Box Breathing (Square Breathing)

Box breathing is a type of breath-work that can shift your energy, connect you more deeply with your body, calm your nervous system, and decrease stress in your body. It can help you to concentrate better and heighten performance. It is also referred to as Square Breathing, 4×4 Breathing, and 4-Part Breath. The benefits of Box Breathing are that we calm and regulate our autonomic nervous system. The breath hold enhances the cardio-respiratory response of the vagus nerve, which stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system.

How long does it take? Start with 4 cycles (4 times following the Box Pattern), then take a break and do 2 more cycles.

Box Breathing



Key Steps/Guidelines:

- Take a comfortable sitting position, upright, but not too tight. Take a few deep abdominal breaths. Exhale through the mouth and inhale through the nose or switch to overall nasal breathing.
- Take one deep exhale. Exhale through the mouth and with the next inhale, start the Box Breathing. Remember to count at your own pace. Most definitely at the beginning you will have to count faster and later you will be able to count slower.

- Breathing pattern: Breath in counting to 4, stop for 4, breath out counting for 4, stop for 4 (1 cycle). Repeat 3 more times.
- If you get dizzy, take a break and breath naturally for a moment, then get back to the exercise.

5. 60-Second Relaxation

Use it if you are **anxious or nervous**, and you need to relax your nervous system and regain your composure.

This technique is designed to help you **quickly become more relaxed** and able to focus better. The titles of each step are deliberately worded oddly, so you can remember the process.

How long does it take? 60 seconds (or longer for greater effect)

Key Steps/Guidelines:

- Breath through your feet (deep breaths).
- Talk to yourself (mantra).
- Sparkle the eyes (peripheral vision activation).