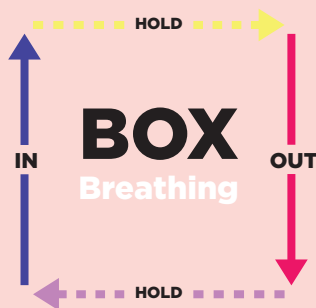# BOX BREATHING

"Box breathing" references a box having four sides, a concept represented here by breathing while you slowly count to four for a total of four times — four counts of breathing in, four counts of holding your breath, four counts of exhaling and four more counts of holding after your exhale.

how to do box breathing

- Sit in a chair, stand, or lie down on your back with one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. When you sit on a chair, ensure that your back is supported and your feet are firmly on the floor (grounded). Breathe as you would normally for one minute.

- Observe the rise and fall of your chest and stomach.

- Breathe in through your nose as you slowly count to four… feel the air enter your lungs.

- Hold your breath for a count of four…

- Slowly exhale out of your mouth for another count of four, releasing all the air from your lungs…

- Hold your breath again for a count of four…

HOLD

IN **BOX** OUT
Breathing

HOLD

- Repeat this exercise as many times as you can. 30 seconds of deep breathing will help you feel more relaxed and in control.

- Practice this exercise one or two times a day, regardless of how you are feeling.

Box breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system which is the opposite of the sympathetic nervous system, otherwise known as "fight or flight."

Take note if your chest is rising but your stomach is not, you are shallow breathing. If your stomach is rising, you are deep breathing activating full relaxation in your body.

Be aware of your breath to ensure that you are taking deep breaths, allowing your stomach to rise.

Box breathing benefits:

- ✳ Helps to control breathing as you can instruct your lungs rhythmically.

- ✳ Helps you refocus when you are having a busy or stressful day.

- ✳ Eases panic and worry.

- ✳ Lowers blood pressure and decreases Cortisol — a stress hormone which can improve your mood.

While anxiety is a normal reaction to stress, it is important to manage it constructively that maintains our physical and emotional well-being.

"**When we're anxious, we breathe shallowly and quickly, which actually creates more anxiety within your body. We can use breathwork to move out of the fight-or-flight state and into that parasympathetic nervous system.**"