



## CENTER FOR TRUE HEALTH

### DR. WEIL'S 4-7-8 BREATH EXERCISE

One way to relax is to consciously watch your breath--it's one of the quickest and easiest ways to assess your state of mind and stress level:

*"Practicing regular, mindful breathing can be calming and energizing and can even help with stress-related health problems ranging from panic attacks to digestive disorders."*

*--Andrew Weil, M.D.*

Dr. Weil recommends the 4-7-8 Breath Exercise; it's super easy and you can do it anywhere—on the subway, while you're walking down the street, etc. Use it to help you fall asleep. Use it whenever anything upsetting happens—before you react, or whenever you're aware of internal tension.

- Inhale through your nose to a mental count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- Exhale completely through your nose to a count of eight.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8. With practice you can slow it down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more deeply. This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system; it's subtle when you first try it but gains in power with practice. Do it at least twice a day; you can't do it too frequently. After you've been practicing this technique for a month you can increase to 8 breaths.