

My Optimal Breathing Ratio

(Finding the best rate of breathing, to regulate nervousness.)

Breathing Ratio	Example	What it does
1:1	Inhale 4 seconds; exhale 4 seconds.	Raises heart rate. Results in physiological activation.
1:2	Inhale 4 seconds; exhale 8 seconds	Lowers heart rate. Brings us towards “rest & digest” mode.
1:2:2	Inhale 4 seconds; hold 8 seconds; exhale 8 seconds.	Same as 1:2.

To figure out what your own optimal “rest & digest” breathing speed, track your breathing on 4 or 5 different occasions when you feel physically (and hopefully mentally) calm. Ideally on a calm afternoon when you are not feeling stressed, or in the evening when you’ve watched a relaxing show, or as you are falling asleep.

Without trying to control your breathing, simply notice the natural speed of your breathing. Write this down, a few days in a row.

Then look at whether there seems to be a speed of breathing that your own body prefers, when it is in “rest & digest” mode.

That will be your own personal Optimal Breathing Ratio, which you can use whenever you start to feel shaky, sweaty, heart-racing, tight and tense, or nervous in any other way.

What is my Breathing Speed?	
<i>Example Day</i>	<i>Inhale 4, exhale 9</i>
Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	

Bring this sheet, completed, to your next coaching session.

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