



## The Three-Minute Breathing Space

Living with the increasing pressures of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can seem like hard work and leave you stressed, tired, frustrated and a feeling that life is running you.

Does this sound familiar?

How would you like to be able to take 3 minutes, yes only 3 minutes out of your day to feel more relaxed and in control and be able to do this anywhere you like? By the end of the article you will be equipped with an exercise that can provide you with a resource you can use to support you to keep a relaxed mind, body and soul in the fast past life styles that we often live.

A few years ago whilst getting over an extended period off work and having spent the time looking at how the way I was living my life was having a negative impact on my general wellbeing, I was lucky enough to go to Holy Isle off the West coast of Scotland with my partner at the time. She had told me of the sights and how relaxing and peaceful this place was and about how the people that live and work there, run sessions in yoga, meditation and other forms of Buddhist teachings seemed just like the perfect place to go and relax and re-charge the batteries.

As day-to-day life continues in its normal routine, remember that you **do** have a choice and control over how you act in these seemingly demanding times. There are a number of different ways in which you can maintain a healthy work life balance, from exercising regularly, practicing yoga and meditation and generally eating healthy. The aim of this article is to provide you with a short exercise to help you step out of “automatic pilot” for 3 minutes in the following way:

1. Stop what you are doing and notice your posture. Sit comfortably with your spine straight and your feet flat on the floor, or, if standing, stand with your feet shoulder width apart with a straight back and shoulders relaxed, with arms down by your side. You can have your eyes open or closed. In your mind ask yourself, “How am I? How do I feel? What are my thoughts?” Recognise and accept your thoughts, even if they are unwanted, for about a minute.
2. Now, gently redirect your full attention to your breathing. Notice each breath in and out. As you notice your breaths say in your mind “in breath” then “out breath” or slowly count to four on the in and out breath. Do this for a couple of minutes, using the breathing to clear the mind and raise your awareness and stillness.
3. Once you are relaxed, expand your awareness of your breathing to your whole body. Feel any tension or aches, and then focus on the sensations as you breathe in. As you breathe out feel a softening of the sensations for a minute. As best you can, bring this expanded awareness to the next few moments of your day.

I wanted to share this exercise with you after using it myself and finding it to be of great benefit when working, travelling to and from places and in general day to day life the three minutes breathing space will allow you to bring about a relaxed state.