

# FRICTION

## INTERNAL Train Your Nervous System

### The Experiment: Practicing Cyclic Breathing

**Duration:** One week

**Time required:** 5 minutes daily (or 30–60 seconds as an in-the-moment reset)

**Goal:** Build a breathing practice that gives your nervous system a reliable reset.

#### Step One: Set your posture.

- Sit or stand with a long, relaxed spine; upright but not rigid.
- Let your shoulders drop and your jaw soften.
- If it helps, place one hand on your chest and one on your belly. Aim for the lower hand (belly) to move more than the upper.

#### Step Two: Begin with a gentle exhale.

- Breathe out through your mouth as if you're slowly fogging a window.
- Don't force it; just let the air leave until your lungs feel relatively empty.

#### Step Three: The cyclic breath (physiological/cyclic sigh).

Each breath has three parts:

- **First inhale (nose, into the belly)**—about 2–3 seconds
  - Inhale steadily through your nose.
  - Feel your lower ribs and belly expand; avoid lifting your shoulders.
- **Second “top-off” inhale (nose)**—about one second
  - Without exhaling, take a short second sip of air.
  - Comfortably fill your lungs a bit more—don't strain.
- **Long exhale (mouth)**—about 4–8 seconds
  - Exhale slowly and steadily through your mouth, like a quiet sigh.
  - Aim for the exhale to be at least twice as long as the inhale.
  - Let your shoulders and face soften as the air leaves.

## Step Four: How often and how long.

You can use this in two main ways:

### **A) Daily practice (conditioning your system)**

- Set a timer for five minutes.
- Repeat the cyclic pattern for the entire time (many people land around 5–7 breaths per minute).
- If your mind wanders, notice it and return to the next breath.

### **B) In-the-moment reset:**

- Take 3–5 cycles
  - Before a challenging conversation or presentation
  - After an intense meeting
  - When you notice your thoughts speeding up or your chest tightening

Even 30–60 seconds can shift your state enough to think more clearly.

## Step Five: What to notice.

As you practice, you may observe:

- A slight drop in heart rate
- Your shoulders settling without you forcing them
- A bit more mental “space” around your thoughts

## Reflection: What did you notice?