USING PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HEART AND
HEART RHYTHM MEDITATION
TO TREAT ANXIETY
WITH EARTH, WATER, FIRE AND AIR BREATHS

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Purpose:
- Introduce you to four energetic breathing methods, Air, Fire, Water and Earth, with practical applications in the treatment of anxiety.

What you will learn:
- An exercise to teach clients how to self-soothe, nurture, forgive, and release emotional trauma
- An exercise that promotes the rediscovery of optimism and joy, as well as the courage to face fears
- Safe, simple methods of grounding and clearing that clients can use with minimal training
- Techniques you can share with your clients to ease racing thoughts, reduce negative self-talk, and change limiting mental constructs.

Objectives:
- Upon completion of this session the participant will be able to name one method of grounding
- Upon completion of this session the participant will be able to describe one practical application for each elemental breath (earth, water, fire, air).
- Upon completion of this session the participant will be able to describe the breath pattern of each type of elemental breath.
USE THE ENERGY OF YOUR HEART AND THE ELEMENT BREATHS TO CREATE THE INNER PEACE YOU DESIRE
HEART RHYTHM MEDITATION

INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED MEDITATION
What Is Heart Rhythm Meditation?

- Heart Rhythm Meditation increases your body’s ability to handle stress.

- In HRM, you learn to breathe fully and deeply, slowing the breath to six breaths per minute or less.

- You learn how to breathe rhythmically, balancing the length of the inhalation and exhalation. Close your eyes and notice your breathing pattern (inhalation/exhalation/holding).

- HRM is a technique that develops such heart awareness that you actually feel your heartbeat.

- HRM synchronizes the two fundamental biological oscillators, heart rate and breath rate.

- This synchronization creates “Entrainment,” a coherent pattern of Heart Rate Variability.

- Heart Rate Variability is a measure of the minute changes in time between heartbeats.
ROLLER COASTER OF ANXIETY

Don’t get caught on the emotional roller coaster of anxiety.
Hands on Heart Position

Feel how comforting this feels as you connect with your heart.
Hands on Heart Practice

• Now imagine that you are breathing from the heart. Notice how you are feeling more relaxed.

• As you continue with your hands on your heart, close your eyes and remember an incident in which you were mildly upset about something.

• Think about this for a while. Be aware of sensations in your body and how you are breathing.

• Notice how your experience of the incident has changed.

• Allow your body to relax into that change.

• The goal of this practice is to expand your capacity to handle stress, not to do away with stress.
AIR BREATH

You will know
when you are free
when your thinking
surprises you.
Use your the power of your breath and heart to decrease feelings of anxiety.
Expanding Your Energetic Heart with the Air Breath

• Inhale and exhale through slightly parted lips.

• Breathe gently and silently, with no holding of the breath.

• Let your heart expand on your exhalation so that it feels like your whole body has become your heart.

• As you breathe in, feel your body coalesce once again around the center of your being: your heart.

• Your heart is as vast as your body. The expanded sense of body broadens the scope of your consciousness.

• If you lose the sensation of your breathing, focus your attention on your heart. Placing a hand (or both hands) on your heart often helps.
Applications of the Air Breath

• The Air Breath is expansive and reduces anxiety by scattering your point of view until you can see from all perspectives.

• Use the Air Breath to reduce anxiety by blowing away what is not important and leaving what is important.

• Let the Air Breath blow away feelings of anxiety so you can think with renewed clarity.
Facing Anxiety with Fire and Light

Become a miniature sun radiating light
**Fire Into Light**

- For this practice, breathe in through your mouth with your lips almost closed, then breathe out through your nose.

- Think of your in-breath as reverse bellows, fanning flames in your solar plexus. Holding your breath, let the light of that fire rise up your spine to a point between your shoulder blades.

- Exhale through your nose, directing the energy of this breath as light in a forward direction from your heart in the center of your chest.

- The nature of water is to flow downward, whereas the nature of fire is to rise and become radiant.

- The light may illuminate the path before you, and it may also illuminate shadowy areas of your life.
Applications of the Fire Breath

- The Fire Breath enhances or replaces the widely used method of gradual exposure.

- As the Fire Breath turns fire into light, the central focus of this radiance illuminates the shadows of repressed or suppressed memories that can cause anxiety. The illuminating radiance of Fire Breath will burn away the anxiety created by these memories.

- The Fire Breath purifies the Heart’s intention, the purpose for which you dedicate your life. This clarity of your life’s purpose helps reduce feelings of anxiety.

- Think of your eyes as giving off light as well as receiving light. This way you give light to others and are less likely to be influenced by the anxiety provoking impressions of others.

- At the psychological level, the Fire Breath gives you courage to face your fears and to stand by what you believe in.
WATER BREATH

Feel the gentle flow of the water as it washes away feelings of anxiety.
Meditating with the Water Breath

• Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

• Make the outgoing breath into a fine stream, a gentle controlled blowing.

• As you inhale, move your attention upwards through your heart center to the crown of your head, feeling uplifted.

• While standing under an ethereal waterfall, imagine your crown opening like a chalice.

• As you exhale, water not only passes over you, it enters your body through the top of your head.

• Water, a metaphor for love, is nurturing and soothing, good for washing away anxiety and cleansing emotional wounds.

• Relax your body, keeping your breath silent and effortless.

• Let the water flow to wherever it is needed for healing your feelings of anxiety.

• You are being loved continually and unconditionally. Allow yourself to relax into the peaceful feeling of being loved unconditionally.

• Become that stream.
BUTTERFLY HUG

• Form of bilateral stimulation used for self-nurturing, self-soothing and transformation

• Reduces anxiety by creating a sense of safety and peace

• Creates reliance as you learn you can manage feelings of anxiety

• Grounds you in the present so you are not worrying about the future

• Use the water breath and abdominal breathing

• Notice what you are thinking and feeling

• Place you hands on your chest with your thumbs interlocked

• Rest your fingers just below your collarbone

• Experience the warmth of your hand on you chest

• Alternate slowly tapping your right hand and your left hand on your chest
EARTH BREATH

- The Earth Breath will reduce your anxiety by grounding you and giving you a feeling of power and stability.

- The Earth Breath slows down time and will slow down the flood of anxiety. You will start to experience a sense of inner peace.

- Using the Earth Breath will help you develop the persistence and endurance you need to regulate your emotions and stabilize your feelings of anxiety.
**SQUARE BREATH**

- Inhale into your heart center to the count of six
- Hold for the count of 12
- As you hold your breath, hold in your heart center someone or something you love
- Exhale for the count of 6
- Repeat this process for a sequence of 5 breaths
Meditating with the Earth Breath

• Start by feeling your feet connecting to the earth.

• Inhale and exhale through your nose.

• Keep your breath balanced without emphasizing either the inhalation or exhalation.

• Exhale from your heart down your spine, down your legs, out the bottom of your feet and into the earth.

• As you exhale, release any feelings of anxiety down into the earth. Just release the anxiety and let it go.

• As you inhale the earth’s energy back up through the bottom of your feet and into your heart, feel the renewing qualities and power of the earth.

• Now exhale fully, inhale fully, then hold your breath while feeling your heartbeat in your chest. For example, exhale for 6 heartbeats, inhale for 6 heartbeats, hold the breath for 12 heart beats and then exhale for 6 heartbeats. This stops the rapid breathing of a panic attack.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Breathe</th>
<th>Visualize Color</th>
<th>Direct energy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>In, Mouth Out, Mouth</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>No particular direction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>In, Mouth Out, Nose</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Upward vertically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>In, Nose Out, Mouth</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Downward vertically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>In, Nose Out, Nose</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Spreading horizontally</td>
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<td>Element Breath</td>
<td>Effective in the Treatment of Anxiety Related to These Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Guilt, confusion, despair, grief, denial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Depression, lack of discrimination, pessimism</td>
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<td>Water</td>
<td>Rigidity, stubbornness, resentment, withdrawal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Spacing out, fear, lack of purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Element</td>
<td>Coping Skills</td>
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<td>Breath</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Clarity of Thought &amp; Reality Testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Courage to Face Fears</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Ability to Soothe and Soften Your Fears</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Grounding, Stability, Persistence and Resilience</td>
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USE THE ELEMENT BREATHS TO CREATE BALANCE AND RHYTHM DURING YOUR DAY
The Elemental Breaths as a Daily Practice

Practice the element breaths every morning and evening in the fresh air out of doors or by an open window, preferable with bare feet, either standing or sitting in a chair.

**Morning Sequence: Creation Practice**

Take at least 5 breaths of each element breath. Start with the Air Breath followed by the Fire Breath, the Water Breath and end the practice with the Earth Breath.

**Evening Sequence: Assimilation Practice**

Take at least 5 breaths of each breath. Start with the Earth Breath followed by the Water Breath and then the Fire Breath. End the practice with the Air Breath.

Hazrat Inayat Khan introduced these traditional energetic breathing practices in the 1920s and they continue to be used today.
Breathe Five

- Take five of one of the element breaths
- Pause and do a body inventory to see if you are still feeling anxious
- If you are still anxious take five more breaths and then reassess your level of anxiety
- Continue this process until your level of anxiety has decreased to a comfortable level.
Emergency Tool Kit

• Hands on Heart
• Full Breath
• Square Breath
• Earth Breath
• Water Breath
• Fire Breath
• Air Breath
• Meditation CD/Recording
• Music Meditation
• Breathe Five
EARTH—WATER—FIRE—AIR
References


Khan, I. Esoteric Papers (Unpublished).


Butterfly Hug Technique. Rodale Books

