

# Voo Breathing: A Quick Guide to Managing Anxiety

## What is Voo Breathing?

Voo Breathing is exactly what it sounds like; deep breaths, vocalized on your exhale as a low, resonant “voooo” sound, almost like a fog horn.

This might sound odd or confusing — why would exhaling a made-up word be useful for people dealing with trauma and anxiety? But it really does work. In fact, there’s science behind it.

## How Does Voo Breathing Work?

Even regular deep breathing is helpful for anxiety. That’s because it both stimulates the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system.

The sympathetic nervous system activates in response to stressful situations, and is often known as the body’s “fight or flight” response. By contrast, the parasympathetic nervous system takes over when the body is at rest in relaxed conditions, and is thus described as the “rest and digest” state.

But Voo breathing, which was developed by trauma-focused psychologist Peter Levine, takes it a step further. This kind of breathing stimulates the vagus nerve, which activates the calming, rest-and-digest parasympathetic nervous system even more.

## How to Try Voo Breathing

Here’s how to use Voo Breathing to manage anxiety-related feelings. This technique doesn’t require anything more than a readiness to engage with your breathing and a comfortable place to sit.

1. Find a comfortable seated position. Choose a chair, cushion, or the floor as you prefer. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so, and keep your feet in contact with the floor.
2. Bring focus to your natural breath. Without controlling your breathing just yet, notice how your breath flows in and out of your body.
3. Take a deep, slow inhale through your nose. Ensure you’re breathing into your belly, rather than your chest; if you’re unsure how to do this, monitor whether your shoulders are moving up and down as you breathe.
4. Make a “voo” sound as you let out a long, deep exhale. Try to count until at least three as you exhale; the longer, the better. Let the sound resonate and vibrate through your entire body.
5. Repeat this cycle for 3–5 minutes, or for as long as it feels good. After 3–5 minutes of this kind of breathing, you can actually change the oxygen levels of your blood and experience neurological benefits!
6. As you come to the end of your breathing exercises, bring your awareness back to your physical surroundings, slowly returning yourself to a baseline state. Notice how you feel now, after your breathwork, in comparison to how you felt before starting.

That’s it! Voo Breathing is available anytime, anywhere we need to manage anxiety.