The three-minute breathing space

A short pause to step out of autopilot, any time of day.

This is a short practice in three steps, about a minute each. Think of the shape of an hourglass: wide, narrow, wide.

1. Check in	Ask: what is going on for me right now? What thoughts are here? What feelings? What sensations in my body? Notice them as they are, even if they are unwelcome.
2. Gather	Narrow your attention to the breath. Feel each in-breath and each out-breath in your belly. Use the breath to anchor you here.
3. Widen	Let your attention spread to your whole body: your posture, your face, the space around you. Carry this wider awareness into the next moments of your day.

When to use it

- [ ] At set times: on waking, at lunch, before bed
- [ ] Before a meeting or a difficult conversation
- [ ] When I notice stress or low mood building
- [ ] When I catch myself worrying or ruminating
- [ ] Between one task and the next
- [ ] Before reaching for the phone or a drink

The times I will practise this week

Cut along the dashed lines. Keep a card in your wallet or phone case.

Breathing space

1. What is here? Thoughts, feelings, body.
2. Gather on the breath.
3. Widen to the whole body and the room.

Patrick O'Hare Therapy

My reminder

When I will use it

Patrick O'Hare Therapy

The three-minute breathing space comes from Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, developed by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale.

© 2026 Patrick O'Hare Therapy · patrickoharetherapy.com
This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.