Gentle Extended Exhalation

Purpose and choice: explore mild pacing only if wanted and comfortable. Choose another route during breathing distress, after repeated discomfort or when care advice makes it unsuitable. Do not use this attention task while driving, cycling, operating machinery or doing a task that needs full awareness.

Steps

1. Begin in a familiar comfortable position. Take an ordinary, unforced in-breath through a comfortable route; do not enlarge it.
2. If easy, let the out-breath last a little longer than usual. No ratio or number applies. Do not squeeze, push with your abdomen or try to empty your lungs.
3. Allow the next in-breath whenever you need it. Do not hold your breath or delay the inhale to finish a target.
4. Finish here, or try one more comfortable paced breath if still wanted. Then leave your breathing alone.

Starting amount: one or two comfortable paced breaths, fewer if wanted, not a treatment dose. If extension makes you strive or wait for air, stop rather than increasing it.

Adaptation and non-breath alternative: stop first. Reconsideration is optional; repeated discomfort calls for advice. Instead, choose an accessible object focus, one sensory-demand change, familiar support or no practice.

Stop: end deliberate pacing for strain, dizziness, breathlessness, tightness, pain, panic, discomfort or preference. Do not add breath holds, larger breaths, humming or repeated sighs to correct the result. Follow prescribed care advice.

Help: call your local emergency service for severe breathing difficulty; a tight or heavy chest; sudden chest pain that persists, spreads to an arm, back, neck, jaw or stomach, or comes with sweating, nausea, light-headedness or breathlessness; unusually pale, blue or grey lips or skin; sudden confusion; or sudden facial drooping, arm weakness or speech difficulty, even if these stroke signs stop. Do not drive yourself or delay help for this card. These are examples, not a complete list. [13 to 15]

Sudden, unexpected breathing difficulty needs immediate medical help. Other new or worsening breathlessness needs urgent medical advice. Do not assume the practice explains symptoms. [13, 22]

If you cannot keep yourself safe, seek emergency help now. Chapter 10 gives fuller support guidance.

Check: consider comfort and usefulness separately, including noticeable later effects if relevant. Comfort does not establish medical safety or justify increasing the amount.

Keep if comfortable enough and useful. **Adapt** one detail only if wanted after ending the trial. **Pause** when uncertain, uninterested or out of capacity. **Stop** for discomfort, worsening or preference, with no obligation to retry.

Evidence and limits: the cited studies do not establish treatment benefit or universal suitability for this exact short version. If you have a respiratory or cardiovascular condition, unexplained breathing symptoms or prescribed breathing instructions, ask your healthcare professional whether this option fits your care. Do not change prescribed instructions to match this card. This practice is not medical vagus nerve stimulation. Chapter 4 and Appendix G explain the evidence limits.