BEFORE AND DURING A WALK

Breathing on a Walk

A companion worksheet for comfortable, unforced breathing

Breathing changes with movement, gradients, weather and effort. This worksheet invites observation rather than a special breathing pattern. Begin with a safe, easy route and a comfortable pace. Keep your eyes open and attention available for your surroundings. If you prefer, do the whole practice seated. At a comfortable stopping place, notice a few ordinary breaths without making them deeper or slower. If you continue walking, allow the breath to find its own rhythm. There is no need to count steps, hold the breath or force breathing through the nose. If it feels uncomfortable, return attention to the surroundings and stop the exercise. Stop walking and seek appropriate help if you feel unwell.

What did I notice about breath and effort?

Did the pace, slope or a pause affect how comfortable breathing felt?

What helped me stay comfortable?

Consider slowing down, stopping, sitting, choosing a gentler route or shifting attention outward.

AFTERWARDS

Choose what suits you

Paying attention to breathing is optional. Some people find an external focus easier, particularly when monitoring the breath makes them anxious. You can listen to nearby sounds, feel the support of a seat or look at the landscape instead. Do not use the worksheet to push through breathlessness or override medical advice about activity. If you have a condition affecting breathing or exercise, follow your own clinician's advice. You do not have to feel calmer for your observations to be useful. The NHS breathing guidance below concerns a stationary exercise; this worksheet does not transfer a counting pattern into walking.

Would I use this approach again?

What would I keep, change or leave out? A different focus is a valid choice.

One sentence to remember

Write a practical reminder about comfort, pace or attention.

Further reading: NHS - Breathing exercises for stress
Read the NHS guidance online