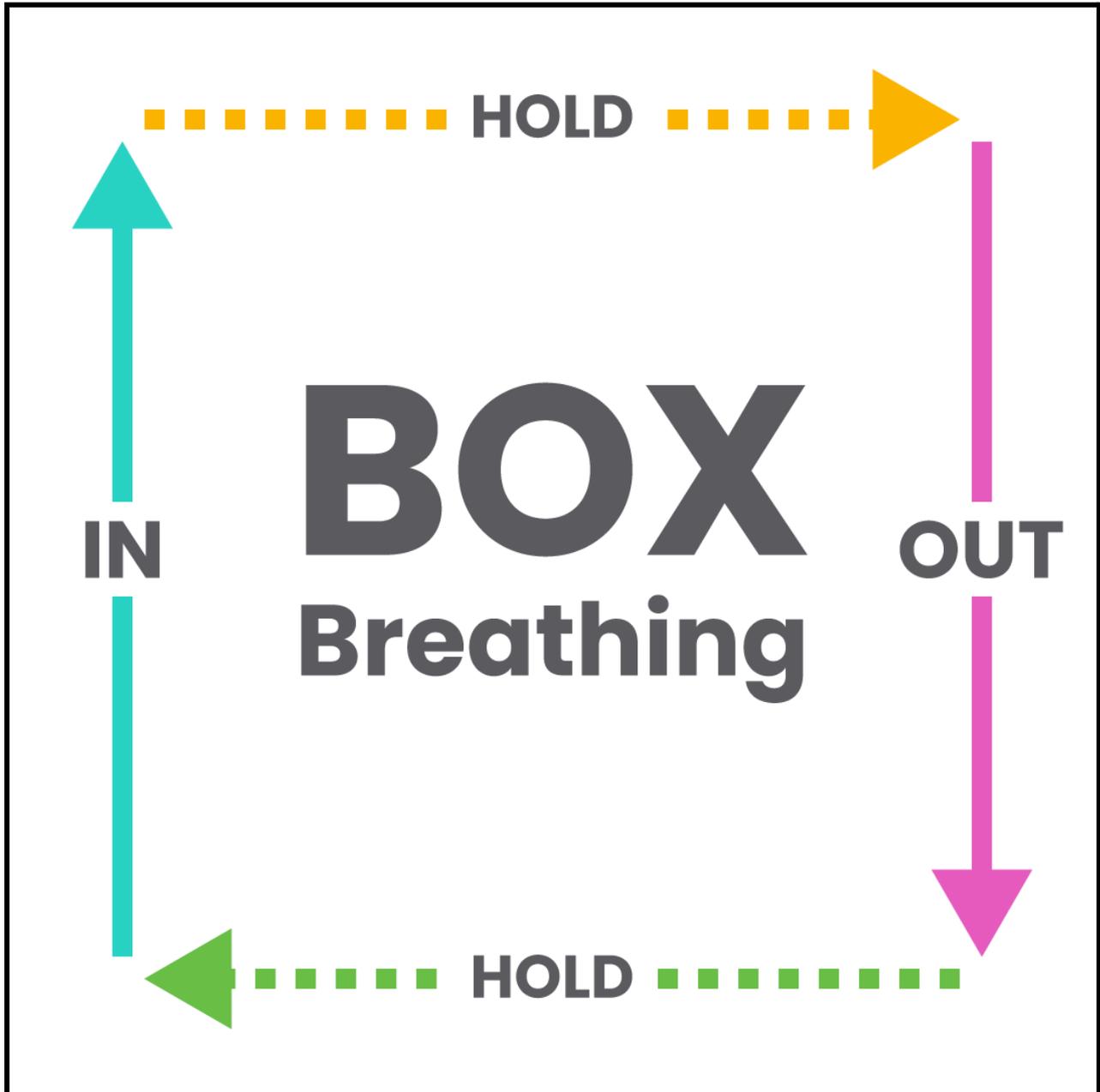




Box Breathing for Stress



Use the diagram above for reference (more info on back).

Box breathing is a simple, structured breathing technique used to calm the nervous system and reduce stress. It involves four steps, each lasting for **four** seconds:

1. **Inhale:** Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose for a count of four.
2. **Hold:** Hold your breath for a count of four.
3. **Exhale:** Exhale slowly and completely through your mouth for a count of four.
4. **Hold:** Hold your breath for a count of four.

Repeat the cycle several times. This technique is even used by athletes, military personnel, and individuals looking to manage stress or anxiety. The structured nature of box breathing helps to focus the mind and promote relaxation.

Box breathing reduces stress through these physiological and psychological mechanisms:

1. **Activation of the Parasympathetic Nervous System:** By focusing on slow, controlled breathing, box breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the body's rest and digest functions. This counteracts the fight or flight response driven by the sympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation.
2. **Regulation of Oxygen and Carbon Dioxide Levels:** Slow, deep breaths help to regulate oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the blood.
3. **Mindfulness and Focus:** The structured pattern of box breathing requires concentration, which diverts attention from stressors and helps clear the mind.
4. **Reduction of Heart Rate and Blood Pressure:** Controlled breathing techniques like box breathing lower heart rate and blood pressure, which are often elevated during stress.