When feeling anxious or anger is raging inside, try to calm your body and your mind by using the following steps in a technique known as Box Breathing, Square Breathing, or Four-Square Breathing:

1. Preferably, sit with your back supported in a chair while both feet are flat on the floor, but you can also focus on your breath in whatever position you find yourself in when feelings are building up. You can try pressing your feet slightly against the floor to increase the sensation of connecting to your body and to the present moment.

2. Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of four. If you need to start with three seconds, you can build your way up to four (or even to six) through practice.

3. Hold the air in your lungs for a count of four without exhaling or inhaling.

4. Breathe out slowly through your nose for a count of four. You may find greater relief from an active fight-or-flight reaction if you extend your exhale time by one or two seconds longer than your inhale count.

5. Hold your lungs empty for a count of four without inhaling or exhaling.

6. Repeating steps 2-5 at least three times will help slow your breathing down and give your body a chance to return to a calmer state.

You may want to use your hand to draw each side of a square in the air as you progress through each step. That will engage more of your senses in the effort to calm you. You can also guide someone else through the technique by drawing the square in the air.

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