Subject 3: Controlling stress with breath focus

Sometimes your brain can misinterpret the symptoms of the stress response (such as an increased heart rate) as a threat in itself - and may end up triggering a further stress response. This is known as a feedback loop. It is possible to break the stress feedback loop by changing two parts of the stress response that are within your control. These are 1) your breathing; and 2) your racing thoughts.

Breath Focus

By learning how to control your breathing, you can reduce your level of stress from distress into eustress. There are many breathing exercises available online, however it is important to find some you are comfortable with, and that fits in your time available.

Box breathing is one strategy that is easy to use and stress reduction benefits can be felt within minute. This strategy involves inhaling to a count of four, holding your lungs full for a four-count, exhaling at the same pace, and holding air in your lungs empty for a count of four before beginning the pattern again. Use this guide from FlourishDx to assist you with this exercise.

Do you want to find out more?

The Generali Employee Benefits Network has partnered with FlourishDx to provide video and other resources on mental health and sleep health. Access these resources here.