

The Anxiety “Off Switch”

**DISCOVER THE 3-MINUTE BREATHE AND
SQUEEZE METHOD FOR RAPID SOCIAL
ANXIETY RELIEF.**

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A racing heart. Blushing. Sweating. An inability to connect with anyone. Extreme self-consciousness. Awkward silences...

Social anxiety can feel like a curse that slowly ruins your life. Making friends becomes hard or impossible. Talking to attractive girls or guys turns you into a stammering wreck. And even simple tasks such as going to the store become difficult.

To make it worse, everyone else *seems* to find social interaction easy and natural (as I explain in my Conversation Continuation Roadmap course, this isn't actually true – but it can seem like it). It makes you question “what’s wrong with me? Why is my own brain constantly working against me?”

It’s incredibly frustrating – and it’s no wonder that many people with social anxiety are unhappy with their lives.

In this short guide, **I’m going to show you how to quickly reduce anxiety when you feel it building in social situations.** It won’t cure social anxiety – but is a surprisingly effective way to control feelings of panic or even sweating and blushing.

Why Listen To Me?

Before we start, I want you to know that I understand what you’re going through. I suffered with social anxiety for over 10 years – and there were times I thought it would never go away.

I found socializing incredibly hard. Especially if I was talking to someone I thought was “cool” or attractive. I was so focused on myself – how I was moving, my voice, whether I was saying the right things, was I too boring – that I came away from any social event exhausted.

I didn’t want to take any job that might involve public speaking. I didn’t want to talk to girls because they might reject me. I didn’t even want to use a microphone when playing online games in case someone made fun of my *voice*.

In the end, I just avoided human interaction altogether. That helped a bit – but caused other worries like “do people think there’s something wrong with me because I never leave the house?” It also severely limited my life.

If any of this sounds familiar to you, you’re definitely not alone. You’ve also made an excellent decision to start doing something about the problem.

It was only after years of sitting at a computer feeling ashamed and unhappy that I finally decided “this isn’t how I want to live the rest of my life.” It was at that point that I started to read hundreds of websites, blogs, studies, articles and books. I studied the most common therapies. I downloaded online courses.

Most of the advice was junk. “Just forget about your worries!” or “It doesn’t matter what people think!”

I logically knew these statements were true. But it didn’t help me feel less anxious. *How* could I stop caring what other people think? *How* could I forget about my anxiety when I felt it every waking minute?

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After years of searching, I finally found the methods that eliminated my social anxiety - permanently. To my surprise, many of the techniques that worked weren't mentioned on most blogs or websites. I'm going to share with you one of these techniques today.

It was a long road, but my life has changed in ways I couldn't even imagine. Since then I've started two businesses that involve talking to clients. I've married my wonderful wife. And I've made new friends who I genuinely enjoy spending time with. All of this I could never have imagined during the worst days of my social anxiety.

Do I still get anxious? Of course. A certain level of anxiety is normal. But it's manageable - and only happens when I do things outside my comfort zone.

Most importantly, it doesn't stop me living my life.

I'm telling you this because I want you to know you're not alone. Millions of people are affected by social anxiety - it's *much* more common than people realize. It silently ruins lives and wastes your best years.

I'm also here to tell you that there is a solution - you *can* live the social, happy and confident life you deserve. I'm proof of that. It's a journey - there is no instant fix. But it's worth it a thousand times over.

Think of this short report is a first step towards a happier, more social life. Over the next few pages I'm going to show you a technique to dramatically reduce anxiety in social situations. It only takes a few minutes - and the people around you won't realize you're doing anything at all.

Once you know this technique, you won't have to worry about panicking in social situations. **You'll be able to calm yourself "on demand" whenever you need.** This is a huge confidence booster.

You can use this technique anywhere you feel anxious, including:

- Having a conversation with a friend or even a stranger.
- Waiting in a queue.
- Before or even during a job interview.
- Talking to an attractive member of the opposite sex.
- At school or college.
- Public speaking.

It won't cure your anxiety. It won't directly help you avoid awkward silences either (I talk about how to do this in my [Conversation Continuation Roadmap video course](#)). But it will take a lot of the fear out of social situations and make it easier to cope with your anxiety.

So let's get started!

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A Proven Technique For Near Instant Relaxation in Social Situations

During my worst years of social anxiety, I'd occasionally force myself to meet old school friends. At this stage I was good at hiding my anxiety– or so I thought. I dreaded social events. But I thought if I could “make” myself go the anxiety would eventually disappear (I later found out I had the right idea...but was doing it all wrong).

One time I met some old friends at a local bar. As usual, I was smiling at the “right” times and asking the occasional question...while hating every minute and plotting an excuse to leave as quickly as possible. In other words, things were going as well as could be expected! Unfortunately, this didn't last. Out of the blue, an old “friend” announced loudly to the group “Alex, why are you always so *quiet*?”

I don't know that made him say it. But I was mortified. I stammered something about being tired and luckily the conversation moved on – maybe they took pity on me. But my heart rate skyrocketed. I tensed up. My anxiety doubled. And I had no way to control it. I felt powerless and panicky...like everyone was watching me and analyzing every word I said...

Does this sound familiar to you?

If yes, this report is going to show you my method for quickly relaxing in any situation. If I had known this technique back then, I could have used to quickly calm myself, lower my heart rate and start to think more logically about the situation.

Why This Technique Is Needed

If you suffer from social anxiety, there are going to be times when you feel anxious away from the safety of your home. Whether you're meeting old friends, building up the courage to talk to a cute girl/guy or even just ordering at Starbucks, this anxiety doesn't just ruin the moment. It also causes a negative link between what you're doing and “fear” – which makes anxiety worse in the long run.

There are plenty of techniques for relaxing. Meditation and positive visualizations are a couple of good examples. Unfortunately, these aren't practical in social situations.

I don't know about you, but sitting down in the lotus position and focusing on my breath isn't something I fancy doing in a crowded bar. And shutting my eyes while thinking of the ocean isn't much help in the middle of a conversation.

I'm not saying you should ignore meditation (in fact I recommend it to all my clients taking my social anxiety program). But if you're at a party, work meeting or even just waiting in line at a store...you need something quicker and less obvious.

That's where the “Breathe and Squeeze” technique comes in handy. I came up with this method because I needed a fast way to relax when meditation wasn't an option. It's also a great exercise before a social event - you can use it in the car or even on a bus or train to relax.

A word of warning though: practice at home first. It's not a difficult technique, but there are a few things to remember. The goal is to be able to perform the technique naturally

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and whenever you need it...without other people noticing.

The Breathe and Squeeze Technique: 5 Steps to Fast Social Anxiety Relief

The “Breathe and Squeeze” technique combines two methods that have been proven to reduce heart rate, blood pressure and anxiety. These methods, **deep breathing** and **muscle relaxation**, aren’t just wishful thinking. They really have been shown to have a direct impact on anxiety.

Here’s how you do it:

Step 1: Breathe in through your nose into your belly for 3-5 seconds

The first step is to take a deep, slow breath into your belly. You should feel your belly expand. This forces the air into the lower regions of the lungs, which is where oxygen exchange is more efficient.

Most people shallow breathe at the top of the chest. Scientists aren’t sure why we learn to breath like this (babies naturally belly breathe), but the result is that the body doesn’t get enough oxygen. This can lead to coldness in your hands and feet, a higher heart rate (which can cause sweating) and a feeling of tension.

Step 2: Hold for 1-2 seconds

After breathing in, pause for a couple of seconds. You’ll find that your thoughts tend to pause at this time too – which is why it’s also recommend during certain types of meditation.

Don’t overlook this pause. It’s a vital part of the process. When you’re feeling anxious, it’s easy to forget. Instead, make sure you practice with a 1-2 second pause until it becomes natural.

Step 3: Breathe out for longer than you breathed in

Breathe out slowly. Ideally, the out-breath should be longer than the in-breath.

You can breathe out through your nose or mouth. But you shouldn’t be able to hear your breath. This might be difficult at first, but comes with practice.

Again, the timing is essential. When I first used this technique, I would take deep breaths but much too quickly. This isn’t anywhere near as effective for reducing anxiety.

Step 4: While breathing, consciously tense then relax neck, shoulder and chest muscles

Take a few breaths using the method above. This will start to calm you. Then, on the third or fourth in breath, tense your shoulders as hard as you can without noticeably moving. On the out breath, *release all tension in the muscle*. Take a few normal deep breaths, then do the same with your neck muscles. Then your chest muscles.

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When you contract your muscles in this technique, your body shouldn't move. This takes some practice and you might need to tense lightly to start with. That's fine – the most important part is the relaxation.

This is a very basic version of “progressive muscle relaxation.” PMR was developed over 50 years ago by Dr. Edmund Jacobson and is proven to help with deep relaxation.

However, the full technique involves tensing and relaxing all major muscle groups in the body. This isn't practical in social situations – clenching and unclenching your fist is likely to attract some strange looks! But I find that the shoulders, chest and neck hold a lot of the tension when you're getting anxious in a social situation.

Step 5: Repeat for 1-5 minutes

Continue this cycle of deep breathing and tensing/relaxing for a few minutes and you'll quickly start to relax. It'll be subtle at first – but the act of forcing your body to relax has a similar effect on your mind.

The great thing about this technique is that you can do it anywhere. Once you practice, you'll even be able to do it while concentrating on an ongoing conversation.

Why It Works

The best way to see how effective the “Breathe and Squeeze” technique can be is to try it. Even so, I wanted to quickly explain why it works.

Reason #1: The exercise triggers the parasympathetic nervous system

When you take deep breaths, the vagus nerve is stimulated. This triggers the parasympathetic nervous system - the opposite of the “fight or flight” system. In other words, deep breathing tells your subconscious that there isn't a need to be scared or anxious.

Not only that, but the exercise also releases a neurotransmitter associated with calmness and focus. So you'll find it easier to listen to conversations while also feeling calmer.

Reason #2: It takes focus away from feeling anxious

As you know, feeling anxious in social situations isn't logical. It doesn't make sense. But just saying this doesn't help. This is because the act of logically convincing your brain that everything is OK just causes you to focus on it more.

The “Breathe and Squeeze” technique has the opposite effect. It takes some of your mental focus away from anxiety and onto your breath/muscle tension. This alone can help reduce anxiety.

Reason #3: It changes your emotional state

When you're anxious or scared, your body reacts. You might start shaking, blushing or sweating. Maybe you suffer from “busy bladder” syndrome or IBS. Whatever the reac-

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tion, it's clear that your mental state can affect your physical body.

The good news is the opposite is also true. If you force your body to relax, your emotional state is likely to follow. It's much easier to control your physical body – via breathing and muscle relaxation – than it is to directly change your emotional state.

Problems & How to Overcome Them

How do I know if I'm deep breathing?

If you're like me, deep breathing might be difficult at first. The easiest way to tell if you're deep breathing is to put your hand on your stomach. If your stomach rises more than your chest, you're on the right track.

Won't people notice if I do this in public?

Part of being socially anxious is feeling that everyone is closely watching you all the time. Fortunately, the Breathe and Squeeze technique is invisible to the naked eye if done correctly. Just make sure you practice at home (preferably in front of a mirror) before doing it in social situations.

Of course, if someone talks to you or you need to stop focusing on your breath – do so. You can always pick it up again later.

If you're *really* worried that people will notice, you could always excuse yourself and go to the bathroom. The whole process only takes a few minutes. I recommend practicing so you can use it at any time though – it's a vital part of your toolbox for overcoming social anxiety.

I can't breathe through my nose?

If you're a mouth breather, breathing through your nose can seem difficult. It might feel like you're not getting enough oxygen. This is natural to start with. Just keep practicing, and you'll find that breathing through your nose starts to feel normal.

Conclusion

So there you have it – the “Breathe and Squeeze” technique for quickly overcoming anxiety in a social situation. Practice it at home until you can almost do it without thinking. You'll then have a powerful tool for managing your nervousness or anxiety.

I wanted to finish this short report with a few thoughts about social anxiety.

In the introduction, I said that social anxiety feels like a curse. And it certainly can be.

But it's also a blessing – but *only* if you resolve to overcome it.

See, most people go through their lives never understanding their brain and thought patterns. They never know how to control their mind or learn techniques to manage

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their emotions. Many are also completely unaware of how they are seen by others – which can be an advantage but also causes huge problems in their relationships.

If you make the decision to fight back against anxiety, you have the potential to learn things that most people never know. You'll learn how to control your thoughts and emotions. You'll use techniques such as the "Breathe and Squeeze" to manage your body's natural responses. You'll learn to understand conversation and social interactions on a deep level – and realize that these are not to be feared.

As I teach clients of my ["Conversation Continuation Roadmap" course](#), you'll also start to realize that many of those people who you thought were "naturals" at socializing really aren't. This is a huge mindset shift.

The only tragedy is if you continue to let social anxiety rule your life. You can cure it. You can overcome it. It might not be easy – but it's possible. Many people before you have done it. You can too.

So start practicing this relaxation technique today. It's an excellent first step towards living your life to the full. And please let me know if it helps or if you have any questions! You can email me any time at alex@socialanxietyshortcuts.com.

All the best,

Alex Barker
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P.S. If you'd like to learn more about the Conversation Continuation Roadmap for avoiding awkward silences, just visit the following URL:

<http://socialanxietyshortcuts.com/ccr-1/>