Best Science of Stress Explanation

Why the long, slow, deep breath associated with meditation lowers stress:

Practice the long, slow, deep breath: breathing in to a silent count of 3 or 4, exhale to a count of 3 or 4, notice the natural pause between inhale and exhale. Repeat 5 breaths like this.

You have just activated the vagus nerve which extends from your brain through your neck, into your chest and through your diaphragm. So when you take a deep breath and relax and expand your diaphragm you instantly turn on your parasympathetic nervous system, your cortisol levels are reduced, and your brain heals.

This is called the relaxation response. The opposite of the stress response, the relaxation response is necessary for your body to heal, repair, and renew. There are many ways to activate the vagus nerve and turn on the relaxation response, but this simple breathing exercise is an easy one to incorporate into your daily life, anytime, anywhere.

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