

Daily breather may ease hot flashes

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Regular, daily practice of calm or paced breathing may ease hot flashes, shows a new study published online in *Menopause*, the journal of the North American Menopause Society.

This controlled randomized study from the Mayo Clinic included 92 women who took time out daily to listen to an instructional CD and practice paced breathing or rhythmic breathing at a normal rate. Paced breathing is a technique of slow, deep breathing. This and other meditative techniques, such as quietly following your breath, have been shown to calm the body's [autonomic nervous system](#). (The autonomic nervous system, which controls functions such as sweating and [heart rate](#), plays a role in hot flashes.)

One group took slow breaths (6 per minute) for 15 minutes twice a day, another took slow breaths for 15 minutes once a day, and the third took breaths at what is considered a normal pace (14 per minute) for 10 minutes a day. The women practiced the techniques, which they all thought were easy to do regularly, and they kept diaries of their hot flashes for 9 weeks.

All the groups reported statistically significant decreases in the number and severity of their hot flashes. The group that had the greatest reduction in their hot flashes was the one that practiced paced breathing twice a day.

For women who want to use this alternative technique for [hot flashes](#), taking that time out every day may be the key to keeping cool.

The study will be published in the February 2013 print edition of [Menopause](#).

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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