Sama Vritti: Box Breathing

Before you practice

These guides are general fitness and mindfulness content written by BLKMAT. They are not medical advice, therapy, or treatment, and they are not a substitute for a qualified yoga teacher or health professional.

- Check with a doctor or physical therapist before starting a new exercise routine, especially if you are pregnant, recovering from an injury or surgery, or managing a heart, blood-pressure, joint, or balance condition.
- Move within a comfortable range. Mild stretching sensation is fine; sharp, pinching, or electric pain, numbness, or dizziness means stop.
- If you feel faint, dizzy, short of breath, or unwell at any point, stop and rest. Get medical help if it doesn't pass quickly.
- Breathe through your nose if you can, and never hold your breath to force a pose.
- Use a wall, chair, folded blanket, or pillow for support whenever it helps. Props are not "cheating."
- Practice on a dry mat on a flat, non-slip floor. BLKMAT mats have a natural rubber base, which contains latex.

Zodiac and chakra themes in these guides are cultural and creative frameworks for choosing what to practice and what to pay attention to. They are not scientific or health claims.

A BLKMAT guide to Sama Vritti, equal breathing. About 5 minutes, seated. Read the safety note first.

What it is

Sama vritti means “equal fluctuation”: the inhale, the hold after it, the exhale, and the hold after that are all the same length. Counted evenly, it is often called box breathing.

When to use it

Before meditation, to steady attention. As a short reset between poses, or in the middle of a day. And as a first step toward breath retention, because the holds are short and structured.

How to practice

1. Sit tall with your shoulders relaxed. Exhale fully.
2. Inhale through your nose for a count of 4.
3. Hold the breath in for a count of 4. Stay soft — do not brace.
4. Exhale for a count of 4.
5. Hold the breath out for a count of 4.
6. That is one round. Repeat, keeping all four counts identical and the breath silent.

Timing and counts

Counts	Rounds	Session
Start at 2-2-2-2 or 3-3-3-3; 4-4-4-4 when it is easy	5–10	About 5 minutes

Why people practice it

The counting occupies the part of the mind that wanders, and the equal rhythm is a simple, measurable drill: when 4-4-4-4 feels easy for ten rounds, the breath is steadier than it was.

Take care

- The holds are a mild form of retention — the cautions in the Kumbhaka guide apply.
- Beginners can skip the holds entirely (inhale 4, exhale 4) and add them later.
- If you are pregnant, or have high or low blood pressure or a heart condition, skip the holds and check with your doctor.
- Stop if you feel dizzy, panicky, or air-hungry. The breath after each round should be as smooth as the one before it.

Related glossary terms

Pranayama

Part of the Breathing Techniques category in the Practice Library.

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