

Give Yourself a Breathing Room

Thich Nhat Hanh explains why it's important to have a sacred space in your home.

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Every home, no matter how small, can have a breathing room. We may have a room for everything else—a bathroom, a bedroom, a living room—but most of us don't have a room for our own breathing and peace of mind. If you live in a one-room studio, or don't have enough space to set aside a whole room, you can make a breathing space or a breathing corner.

Your breathing room is a sacred place. You don't need any furniture—maybe just a cushion or two, and perhaps an altar or a table with fresh flowers. If you want, you can have a bell to help you with the practice of stopping and mindful breathing.

Think about the setup of this room or corner carefully. How much we enjoy being in a certain place very much depends on the energy that is generated within it. A room can be well-decorated but feel cold and unfriendly; another can lack color and furniture but can feel simple, spacious, and comfortable. If you live with other people, you should all design and decorate this space together, perhaps with flowers, pebbles, or photographs. Don't put a lot in the room. The most important elements are a place to sit and a feeling of peace.