

Here's why your Apple Watch tells you to breathe all the time

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Matt Bedsole is a patent attorney in Pittsburgh who finds his Apple Watch's automatic wellness notifications "mildly annoying."

His job requires that he sit for [long hours](#), focusing intensely on drafting legal documents and scanning through mounds of intellectual property paperwork. Like clockwork, the elaborate push notifications temporarily throw off his workflow.

"Breathe," Bedsole's Apple Watch Series 2 screen reads as the wearable taps his wrist at least twice a day by default.

"Either I'm working on something important, or maybe I'm stressed out, but the push notification doesn't help. It just adds to things I have to do or pay attention to," Bedsole said. "I like it in theory. But in practice, it's not that useful to me so I clear the [notification](#) and move on."

If you're an Apple Watch wearer, you get the reminders to do the seemingly mindless task, too, unless you toggle the settings off after buying the smartwatch. Apple has a very thorough and intentional system for sending its users reminders to inhale, however, theories run rampant on social media about which actions or feelings trigger the alerts.

The spot-on timing of the Apple Watch's notifications lead some people to believe that it's linked to their [stress levels](#) or personal breathing patterns, assuming that the device senses when they're under pressure so it pings them to bring them back down to earth.

"I got so stressed out today my Apple Watch made me breathe 4 times!" writes Twitter user @Vic_takes_twitr. "Does your Apple Watch ever tell you to breathe?" asks Twitter user @_Hosseh, "Because mine constantly does when I'm stressed and it only stresses me out even more."

Malea Capuno, a 21-year-old college student at the University of Washington was nervously sitting on a panel in front of her elders at a national speaking engagement and as she prepared to take the mic, "my watch vibrated telling me to breathe almost like it knew I was

overwhelmed," she said.

"I find it funny when I get those. I know when I'm overwhelmed and feeling a little anxious but it's a helpful little reminder."

Several people on Twitter report similar incidents of the notifications happening when they're under pressure. Others think it's linked to anger, and some say the smartwatch tends to tell them to breathe while they're in the middle of stuffing their faces full of food.

"I love how my Apple watch conveniently tells me to breathe when I'm shoving food down my throat," writes Twitter user @allyfair7. "I don't appreciate my Apple Watch telling me to breathe while I'm in the middle of scarfing down some food. Lemme be fat in peace," writes Twitter user @c_breezyyy_.

Reddit user shecantstayaway said, "Mine usually only notifies me when I'm angry or on high alert...like when my boyfriend says/does something out of line and I'm upset."

Some people say the watch tends to catch them when they're playing intense sports.

Will Bruno who uses a Series 3 said, "It pops up when I'm going through [physical stress](#), like playing at ball or working out at the gym."

Some have an extreme distaste for the surprise notifications, like Twitter user @LongJohn_5 who says "I hate when my Apple Watch tells me to breathe as if I have just been sitting here holding my breath for the last 2 and a half hours."

However, most seem to find Apple's baked-in mindfulness techniques useful.

"I have personal struggles with anxiety," said Bruno, a 24-year-old small business owner in Miami. "In my community, we don't deal with [mental health](#) very much, but this created something small I can do through my day to keep me moving, and I tell everyone I know that it actually works."

What's really behind Apple's reminders to breathe?

The tech giant says the alert is to help you "relax and focus on your breathing," which can actually come in handy as conscious breathing allows you to shift and release negative energy instead of storing it in your body, according to the Mayo Clinic.

The medical clinic also says that deep breathing exercises "may help ease symptoms of stress-related disorders and mental health conditions such as anxiety, general stress, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder."

The alerts aren't actually tied to stress, anger or holding your breath at all. It's more like a call-to-action, or a helpful reminder to launch the watch-based Breathe app, which takes you through a series of deep breaths.

The iPhone maker's alerts try to find moments when you've been sitting silently for at least five minutes because, in theory, you can discreetly spend at least 60-seconds to meditate in those moments. The default minute-long breathing exercise encourages you to only take seven breaths during the experience.

Apple conducted an investigation with watch users who practice meditation as well as people who have asthma or other breathing problems, and taking seven breaths per minute was the most comfortable for the greatest number of people.

If you want more reminders to take a moment to breathe, you can turn up the reminders to at 10 times per day at most.

How do I turn off the breathe alerts?

The Breathe function is associated with the iPhone Health app and keeps up with breath data through the "Mindfulness" section of the app. The mindfulness section will recommend other meditation applications.

If you never use the feature, then you can easily disable the breathing reminders by doing the following:

1. Open the Apple Watch app on your iPhone and tap the My Watch tab.
2. Tap Breathe.
3. To choose how often you get reminders, tap Breathe Reminders.
4. To choose how you get notifications, tap Allow Notifications, Send to Notification Center, or Notifications Off.

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