

## Breathing Exercises

- The way you breathe affects your whole body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress.
- Breathing exercises are easy to learn. You can do them whenever you want, and you don't need any special tools or equipment to do them.
- You can do different exercises to see which work best for you.

### Belly Breathing

Belly breathing is easy to do and very relaxing. Try this exercise anytime you need to relax or relieve stress.

1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

### Breath Focus

While you do deep breathing, use a picture in your mind and a word or phrase to help you feel more relaxed.

1. Close your eyes. Take a few big, deep breaths.
2. Breathe in. As you do that, imagine that the air is filled with a sense of peace and calm. Try to feel it throughout your body.
3. Breathe out. While you're doing it, imagine that the air leaves with your stress and tension.
4. Now use a word or phrase. As you breathe in, say in your mind, "I breathe in peace and calm."
5. As you breathe out, say in your mind, "I breathe out stress and tension."
6. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

In this technique, you breathe in as you tense a muscle group and breathe out as you release it. Progressive muscle relaxation helps you relax physically and mentally.

1. Lie comfortably on the floor.
2. Take a few deep breaths to relax.
3. Breathe in. Tense the muscles of your feet.
4. Breathe out. Release the tension in your feet.
5. Breathe in. Tense your calf muscles.
6. Breathe out. Release the tension in your calves.
7. Work your way up your body. Tense each muscle group. This includes your legs, belly, chest, fingers, arms, shoulders, neck, and face.

### Modified Lion's Breath

As you do this exercise, imagine that you're a lion. Let all of your breath out with a big, open mouth.

1. Sit comfortably on the floor or in a chair.
2. Breathe in through your nose. Fill your belly all the way up with air.
3. When you can't breathe in any more, open your mouth as wide as you can. Breathe out with a "HA" sound.
4. Repeat several times.