



DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

- Diaphragmatic breathing is a simple and easy to use relaxation technique.
- It can be performed at any time and in any place.
- It needs to be practiced to ensure competence with this form of relaxation. Perform this technique several times a day.
- It can be very effective in modifying the stress response. During stressful events the breathing rate increases. By instigating the diaphragmatic breathing technique the breathing rate can be brought under control.
- When confronted with a potentially stressful situation the diaphragmatic breathing technique can be used to gain control in the situation and prevent the stress response from happening.



How to do diaphragmatic breathing

- Get into a comfortable position.
- Think about your breathing pattern.
Be aware of the speed and depth of your breaths.
- Think about the effort you are using.
- How tense are the muscles at the back of your neck and over your shoulders?
- Is your jaw clenched?
- Do your shoulders rise up when you take a breath?
- Slow down the rate of your breathing. Take time to concentrate on this.
- Try to reduce the effort you are putting into your breathing.
- Make a conscious effort to reduce the tension in the muscles at the back of your neck and over your shoulders. Relax your jaw. Let that tension go.
- Now, place your hand(s) gently on your stomach.



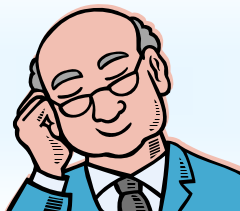
- Take an easy, slow, deep breath in through your nose and let the air glide slowly down into your “stomach” and feel your hand(s) rise gently as they rest on your stomach.
- Do a slow count of 5.

Note: Make sure that your shoulders stay completely relaxed.

- Hold your breath for the count of 3.
- Then breathe/sigh out slowly through your mouth and let the air glide out slowly. Feel your whole body relax as you breathe out.
- Do a slow count of 5.
- Enjoy that feeling of relaxation.
- Perform 3 or 4 deep breaths in this way, and then breathe normally for a minute or so before trying again.
- You may find it helps if you close your eyes and think of some pleasant scene.



For example: thinking of a field or corn swaying in a gentle summer breeze or imagining yourself on a quiet beach on a warm summer’s day relaxing in the shade listening to the rhythm of the waves washing gently over the shore.



- You may wish to visualize the journey that your breath takes gliding slowly down into your lungs and out again.
- You may want to think about a particular part of your body that is tense and imagine the relaxation “flowing” over this area and slowly “washing” the tension away.
- Use the thought that helps you best.



Feel yourself gaining control over your body.