

Breathing Exercises

Breathing Exercises Promote Relaxation in Four Ways:

1. Relaxation comes through the tensing and relaxing of muscles. A deep inhalation tenses the respiratory muscles and a deep exhalation relaxes them.
2. Allowing for more oxygen to be absorbed will improve body function. This assists the body's response, repair, and recovery from stress. Without oxygen, cells in vital organs of the body would die in minutes.
3. An increased amount of oxygen allows the heart rate to slow down. This produces a calming effect.
4. Taking time for breathing exercises gives you the chance to pause and plan your response to a stressful situation. A diversion from stress prevents distress.

Deep Natural Breathing

1. Sit in a chair, arms at your sides, legs uncrossed.
2. Note any tension in your muscles.
3. Put one hand on your chest and the other hand on your abdomen.
4. Take in a breath slowly and deeply through your nose allowing your abdomen to expand and push up your hand. After your abdomen is full of air, allow your chest to expand pushing up your other hand. This is one long steady breath.
5. Hold the air in for three seconds.
6. Purse your lips and exhale through your mouth making a relaxing, whooshing sound.
7. Continue to take long, slow, deep inhales through your nose and let out long, slow exhales through your mouth.
8. Focus on the sound and feeling of deep breathing. Continue for three to five minutes.

Purifying Sighing*

1. Keep your shoulders erect.
2. Let out a big sigh, making a sound of relief as the air leaves your mouth.
3. Continue to sigh 10 to 15 times consecutively when the need arises.

**Note:* If you are prone to hyperventilating, do not do this breathing exercise.