

Look & Feel Great Method Nine Steps To Healthy Lifestyle

Abdominal Breathing Technique

Breathing is an integral part of our living and knowing how to breathe is very important. How it's done: With one hand on the chest and the other on the belly, take a deep breath in through the nose, ensuring the diaphragm (not the chest) inflates with enough air to create a stretch in the lungs. The goal: Six to 10 deep, slow breaths per minute for 10 minutes each day to experience immediate reductions to heart rate and blood pressure. Keep at it for six to eight weeks, and those benefits might stick around even longer.

When it works best: Before an exam, or any stressful event. But keep in mind, those who operate in a stressed state all the time might be a little shocked how hard it is to control the breath. To help train the breath, consider biofeedback tools such as Breathe Strong app, which can help users pace their breathing wherever they are: <http://www.breathestrong.com/apps/>

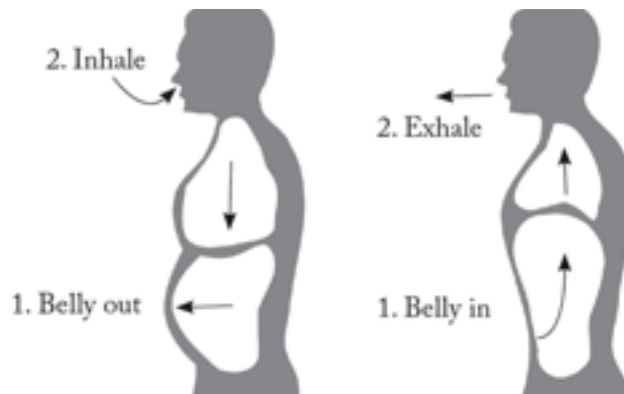
How do you do breathing exercises? There are lots of breathing exercises you can do to help relax. The first exercise below—belly breathing—is simple to learn and easy to do. It's best to start there if you have never done breathing exercises before. The other exercises are more advanced. All of these exercises can help you relax and relieve stress.

Belly breathing

Belly breathing is easy to do and very relaxing. Try this basic 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.

Belly breathing is also referred to as *diaphragmatic breathing* or *abdominal breathing*. It gets its name from the way it uses the diaphragm (which lies below the lungs) to fully saturate the lungs with oxygen. This has the effect of pushing the belly outward.



Next steps

After you have mastered belly breathing, you may want to try one of these more advanced breathing exercises. Try all three, and see which one works best for you:

- 4-7-8 breathing
- Roll breathing
- Morning breathing

4-7-8 breathing

This exercise also uses belly breathing to help you relax. You can do this exercise either sitting or lying down.

- 1 To start, put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest as in the belly breathing exercise.
- 2 Take a deep, slow breath from your belly, and silently count to 4 as you breathe in.
- 3 Hold your breath, and silently count from 1 to 7.
- 4 Breathe out completely as you silently count from 1 to 8. Try to get all the air out of your lungs by the time you count to 8.
- 5 Repeat 3 to 7 times or until you feel calm.
- 6 Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.



Roll Breathing

When roll breathing, always breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. As you breathe out, make a whooshing sound. Notice how your belly and chest move like waves, rising and falling in a steady motion. Place your left hand on your belly and your right hand on your chest. Notice how your hands move as you breathe in and out.

Step 1: Breathe in to fill your lower lungs. Your belly will push your left hand up as you do this. Your right hand won't move.

Step 2: Then breathe out. Your left hand will fall as your belly falls. Do these steps 8 to 10 times.

Step 3: Next, breathe in as you did before, but don't stop after your left hand pushes up. Continue to breathe in. You will feel your upper chest expand and push your right hand up. Your left hand will fall a little as your belly falls.

Step 4: Breathe out slowly through your mouth. As you breathe out, feel the tension leaving your body. Both your hands will fall. Do this exercise for 3 to 5 minutes.

Morning breathing

Try this exercise when you first get up in the morning to relieve muscle stiffness and clear clogged breathing passages. Then use it throughout the day to relieve back tension.

- 1 From a standing position, bend forward from the waist with your knees slightly bent, letting your arms dangle close to the floor.
- 2 As you inhale slowly and deeply, return to a standing position by rolling up slowly, lifting your head last.
- 3 Hold your breath for just a few seconds in this standing position.
- 4 Exhale slowly as you return to the original position, bending forward from the waist.
- 5 Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

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