

Diaphragmatic Breathing

How do you breathe?

- Place one hand below the rib cage and one hand on your chest.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Notice the movement of your hands when you inhale. Which hand moves more?

Chest Breathing

- Short, shallow breaths primarily use the chest and the upper lobes of the lungs
- When feeling afraid, stressed, or anxious, people often utilize this type of breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing (belly breathing)

- Imagine how babies breathe, when you see the entire stomach and diaphragm moving in and out.
- The diaphragm is a shelf of muscles that separate the thoracic cavity (lungs and heart) from the abdominal cavity (stomach, etc.).
- A deep, full breath allows both the upper and lower lungs to fill with oxygen, moving the diaphragm downward and pushing the stomach out, to make room for all the air.
- This type of breathing increases the oxygen that enters the body, reducing tension and nourishing tissues.
- When you breathe out fully (stomach is tucked in), you also help to release all the tension and some of the toxins in the body.
- When intentionally done, this type of breathing can slow your breathing rate, eliciting a feeling of relaxation and jump starting the parasympathetic response, which has the opposite effect of the sympathetic nervous system (stress response) in the body.

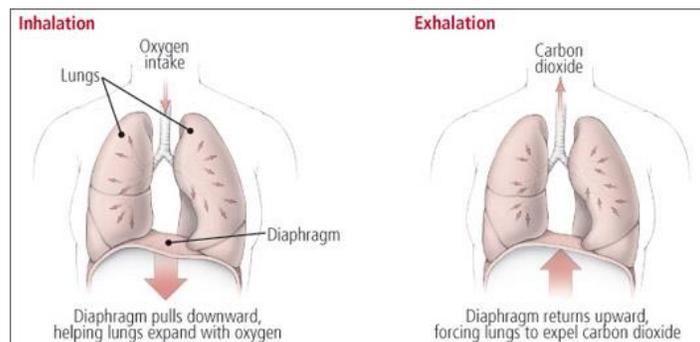


Image from: <http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/take-a-deep-breath>

To Practice:

- This technique can be practiced lying down or when seated, and in almost any setting.
- You should practice for 2-5 minutes each day, until it feels natural and comforting.

You can count to three (Breathe in 1... 2...3) or come up with a phrase to say (Breathe in and imagine the oxygen going all the way down into my stomach) to help you pace yourself and ensure you take slow breaths.