

BREATHING

Breathing more slowly, gently and deeply helps to calm and relax and can also **reduce tension and anxiety** and improve concentration and memory. Shallow and fast breathing can contribute to anxiety, muscular tension, panic attacks, headaches, and fatigue. By practicing **slow, deep breathing**, your mind will calm down and your body will relax. Diaphragmatic, or, abdominal breathing is one of the easiest ways to produce the relaxation response. Practice 10 or more minutes to learn the proper technique for deep relaxation. helping to reduce muscle tension and anxiety. Throughout the day, frequently take a few slow, deep breaths or do a couple minutes of diaphragmatic breathing, especially when feeling stressed.



TIP

6 breaths per minute is ideal for practice.

Inhale for **5** seconds

Exhale for **5** seconds

Try the free breath pacer*

Technique

If you are breathing specifically to relax or calm yourself it is important to breathe



in through your **nose**,



and **out** very slowly through your **mouth**.

Purse your lips and breathe out as though blowing through a straw. This will allow you to prolong your exhalation.

Lie on the floor and place one hand on the center of your chest and the other on your abdomen, right at the waistline. When you breathe in, notice whether your abdomen expands – if it does, you are breathing from your diaphragm. If your belly doesn't move, or moves less than your chest, you are breathing from your chest.

To shift from chest to abdominal breathing, make one or two full exhalations that push out the air from the bottom of your lungs – this creates a vacuum that will pull in a deep, diaphragmatic breath on your next inhalation.

More Information

*Free EZ-Air Breath Pacer: www.bfe.org/breathpacer.htm

Breathing methods: www.pe2000.com/anx-breathe.htm

YouTube guided breathing meditation: www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wFX9Wn70eM