

Introduction to diaphragmatic breathing control

The purpose of this breathing exercise is to help you to change your breathing pattern, moving from upper chest breathing to abdominal breathing. It has been known for a long time that deep breathing can help relax the mind and body.

By practicing, it is possible to achieve a state of relaxation, however this is not the main purpose. The purpose is to gain control over your breath and to take deep breaths, down into your abdomen. If you experience a state of relaxation, I encourage you to enjoy this and gently refocus your attention to the breath.

If you happen to experience any dizziness, you may wish to open your eyes and sit still for a few quiet breaths, then when you are ready, gently return your attention to the practice.

Find yourself a quiet and relaxed space, somewhere that you can sit undisturbed while you undertake this exercise. You may want to turn your phone off so that you cannot be disturbed or close the door.

It is recommended that you wear comfortable, loose clothing. For now, you may just need to make some minor adjustments, such as loosening any tight clothing, or take your shoes off.

Diaphragmatic breathing control exercise

To begin, find a comfortable position. Perhaps this is lying flat on your back or sitting comfortably in a chair. Ensure your legs or arms are uncrossed and both feet on the ground. Once you have settled into a comfortable position, close your eyes. If you feel more comfortable with your eyes open, find a spot to focus your attention, or gently down cast your eyes.

Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen, just below your rib cage. Next, locate the breath in the body. Perhaps you will first notice the breath arising at the nostrils. Take some time to locate and connect with your breath. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, completely filling up your lungs.

Pause for a moment and then slowly release the air through your nose or mouth, whichever you prefer, exhaling as fully as you can. With each exhale, allow your body to just let go, more and more.

If you are breathing from your abdomen, the hand below your rib cage should actually rise. You should only notice little movement with the hand placed over your chest.

Again, take in another very slow, full, deep breath down into your abdomen. Feel your hand rise and your chest only slightly expand.

Then let all the air out again, slowly and fully. Allow your whole body to feel like a rag doll and free from tension.

Continue to breathe in this way, inhaling and exhaling slowly. Allowing any tension to melt away. Once your breath is slow and your abdomen is rising, continue to focus on your breath and enjoy this feeling of physical relaxation.

Gently inhaling through your nose, as the breath travels down into your abdomen. It is nearly time to finish the breathing practice, as we do this I encourage you to return your attention back to the breath as it enters your nostrils, starting to let go of the breath in your abdomen.

Perhaps you may also want to gently let your hands fall away from the body, returning to a comfortable position. If you have had your eyes closed, you may want to gently blink your eyes back open and reconnect to the space that you are in.

It is important to remember to practice so that your natural state of breathing can be free from tension and relaxed. I encourage you to be aware of your breath throughout the day and to take a few quiet moments throughout the day to ensure that you are breathing deep down into the abdomen. The more you practice, the easier and more natural you will feel.