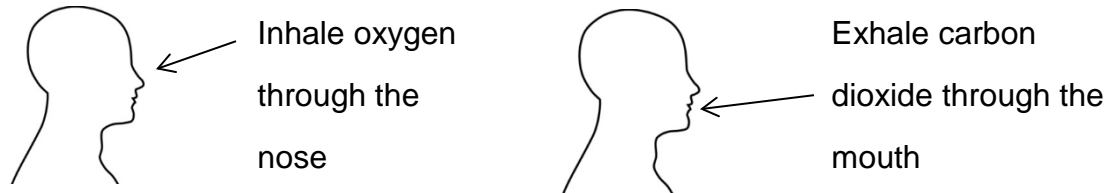


# Breathing Techniques for Stress and Pain Management

## Breathing Basics

Breathing exercises cover a range of techniques such as deep breathing, rhythmic breathing, diaphragmatic breathing and many more. The ability to focus in on specific body sensations like breathing can help the body work efficiently and heal more quickly.



## Diaphragmatic Breathing

This exercise helps you become aware of your breath, feeling both the inhalation and the exhalation. It can be done with your eyes either open or closed. Allow your breath to flow, be natural and unforced.

Notice your breathing right now. Observe the movements and sensations that occur in your body as you breathe in and out. Place a hand on your abdomen, and feel the abdomen rise as you inhale and fall as you exhale.

Visualize in your mind's eye, gently drawing the breath into your abdomen and then letting it go easily, not forcing it out, letting go of tension. Take in only as much air as you need in each breath and then let it out.

Feel your inhalation expand your abdomen and lower back, then your chest. Make the breaths very slow and deep, but not to the point of strain. Allow the muscles in your body to soften, to go limp and relax as you feel the rising and falling of the breath and abdomen. Practice during random moments in your day, at home, work or on public transit.

Try diaphragmatic breathing for five or ten minutes. Write down how it felt or any sensations in your body.

## Breathing to a Count

Breathing to a count increases our ability to breathe slower and deeper.

Sit or lie down comfortably. Inhale for a count of two seconds, then exhale for a count of two seconds, saying to yourself inhale one, two, exhale one, two.

Once you get the idea and feel of breathing in rhythm, start an increasing progression;

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inhale for a count of three seconds and then exhale for three seconds. Next, inhale for a count of four seconds and then exhale for four seconds.

Continue, increasing the number of seconds, until you reach a comfortable limit, then work your way back down. If you got as high as inhaling and exhaling to a count of twelve seconds, go back to eleven, then back to ten, and so on, until you reach a very comfortable pace, maybe five seconds and maintain that pace.

In one or two weeks you will notice measurable increase in the number of seconds you inhale and exhale, and a deeper sense of relaxation each time you practice this.

Try breathing to a count for 5 minutes. Write down how it felt in your body and any thoughts or feelings you had.