

Deep Breathing: I

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This deep breathing exercise will help you achieve a state of calmness and relaxation. As we begin, take one hand and place it on your stomach right over your belly button. Take your other hand and place it on your chest, just above your breastbone. Now, for a moment and take a few deep breaths as you normally would. As you're doing this, notice which hand is moving more than the other. Or, are both hands moving about the same? Once you have learned the proper technique of deep breathing you will be able to feel your abdomen and then your lungs fill with air as one hand rises, and then the other. Now, in order to begin settle comfortably into your chair. Close your eyes, and pay attention as you take a few normal breaths. When we start the deep breathing exercise, imagine as you're breathing in that the air is traveling in through your nose, down into your stomach filling your abdomen, causing that hand on your stomach to rise. Then, continue breathing in filling your lungs with air, causing the hand on your chest to rise. We'll then hold that full breath for a moment, and then the exhalation will be very slow at the same pace we did our inhalation.

Let's begin. Breathe in slowly through your nose. Keep pulling air in down into your stomach... feeling your stomach rise... keep bringing that air in as your lungs fill with air. When you have taken in all the air that you can, hold that breath... hold it... and now very slowly exhale that breath through your nose allowing your lungs to collapse as they empty, and then your stomach to sink as you use your stomach muscles to squeeze all of that air out of your stomach. Good. Let's try that one more time. This time, as you're taking the breath in, imagine all of your muscles filling with air and expanding. And then, as we exhale that breath imagine all of your muscles slowly relaxing, leaving you feeling very relaxed and heavy in your chair. Let's begin. Breathe in slowly through your nose... imagine that air going down into your stomach... filling your stomach with air. Once your stomach fills, keep breathing in... filling your lungs... keep breathing in until you can't take in any more air. Hold that breath... and now slowly exhale that breath, allowing your lungs to empty... and then allowing your abdomen to sink inward. Now, take a moment to notice how different your body is already feeling. Notice how much warmer your muscles are feeling, how much more relaxed and heavy you feel against the surfaces of your chair.

For this next breath, I want you to continue with the abdomen and then the lungs. However this time we are going to learn to pace our breath. So, as we breath inward, we are going to breath inward to a count of 10. Then we'll hold our breath for a count of 2. And then we'll slowly exhale that breath to a count of 10. Don't forget to use your hands as a gauge of how you're filling your stomach and your lungs with air. So take a few normal breaths. And, let's begin. Breath in slowly through your nose... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10. Hold that breath... and now slowly exhale that breath through your nose... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10. And, one more time. Breath in slowly through your nose... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10. Hold that breath... and now slowly exhale that breath through your nose... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... and 10. This is a simple technique that you can use any time that you feel yourself becoming anxious or stressed. This is something that you can do while sitting in your classroom, or if you are in a more private setting.