



# Deep Breathing

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## WHAT MAKES IT MEANINGFUL

Search for stillness and reprieve from your busy day through practicing some of these deep breathing exercises. Studies have shown that deep breathing, or diaphragmic breathing, can be a practical means of reducing stress, increasing energy and stamina, and lowering blood pressure and heart rate. Just by grounding yourself and focusing your attention on your breath, you can learn to calm your senses and regulate your nervous system.

Knowing how to deep breath can be a helpful skill to have in your toolbox on days when you're feeling anxious, stressed, or triggered, or are just looking for some quiet, alone time.

## TIME

Deep breathing can be practiced for as little as 1 minute to 1 hour.

## MATERIALS

The only thing you'll need to accomplish this activity is a quiet and safe space for you to relax. The best part is, deep breathing can be done anytime, anywhere.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Find a nice, comfortable spot to sit or lie down, where you know you won't be disturbed. Sit with your back straight and your feet level to the floor. If you're lying down, lay with back flat and your neck supported.
- 2) Close your eyes, and place one of your hands on your belly, just below the ribs. Follow by placing your other hand on top of your chest.
- 3) Now follow through with a regular breath cycle.
- 4) Inhale and take a slow, deep breath. Breathe the air in through your nose, like you're smelling a pretty flower. Pay attention to your belly, as it swells up under your hand.
- 5) Pause, and hold your breath for a quick second or two.
- 6) Then slowly breathe out through your mouth, like you're blowing out the candles on a birthday cake. Try to focus in on your hand as your belly contracts inward with your breath.
- 7) Repeat these steps several times, until you've reached a state of calm awareness. Allow your breath to fall in to its natural state of rhythm.



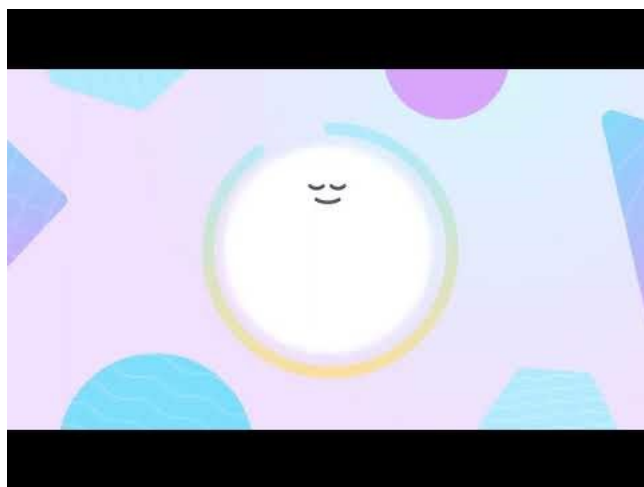
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- 8) You can also add mindfulness to this breathing pattern, as well. For example, during inhalation, imagine that your breath is spreading relaxation and peace to all parts of your body. As you exhale your breath, envision that you're also breathing out your stress, worry, or pain.
- 9) Start by doing this deep breathing exercise for a minimum of 1-2 minutes; once you feel comfortable with that level of tolerance, increase your breathing time by another 2-3 minutes. You can begin to gradually work your way up to 10 or 20 minutes, or you can choose to include this practice at multiple points throughout the day.

## RESOURCES

Helpful links and/or resources to consider:

- To learn more about the benefits of deep breathing, please visit - <https://www.urbanbalance.com/benefits-deep-breathing/>
- Deep breathing exercises to follow along with - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ep5mKuRmAA>



- To learn how to ground yourself during moments of stress, anxiety, or fatigue, please visit - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30VMIEmA114>

## SUPPORTS NEEDED

You may wish to do this activity on your own, in a group, or with a trusted companion – whatever works best for you!

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