

Relaxation: Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Sit in a comfortable position
2. Place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest
3. Try to breathe so that only your stomach rises and falls

As you inhale, concentrate on your chest remaining relatively still while your stomach rises. It may be helpful for you to imagine that your pants are too big and you need to push your stomach out to hold them up. When exhaling, allow your stomach to fall in and the air to fully escape.

Inhale slowly. You may choose to hold the air in for about a second. Exhale slowly. Don't push the air out, but just let the natural pressure of your body slowly move it out.

It is normal for this healthy method of breathing to feel a little awkward at first. With practice, it will feel more natural.

4. Get your mind on your side

One other important factor in getting relaxed is your mind. Your mind and body are connected. The mind influences the body and the body influences the mind. What you do with your mind when you are trying to relax is very important. The key is to avoid thinking about stressful things.

You can think about...

Neutral things (e.g., counting, saying a word like "calm" or "relax")

Pleasant things (e.g., imagining a pleasant place)

5. It is recommended that you practice 2 times per day, 10 minutes each time.