

Diaphragmatic Breathing

The diaphragm is a dome shaped muscle that forms the floor of the rib cage. It is the most efficient muscle for breathing and using this muscle aids in relaxation. Diaphragmatic breathing is an important technique to learn because it helps settle down, or relax, the autonomic nervous system.

The correct use of diaphragmatic breathing can help quiet brain activity resulting in the relaxation of all the muscles and organs of the body. This is accomplished by slow, rhythmic breathing concentrated in the diaphragm muscle rather than the upper chest.

How To Do Proper Relaxation Breathing:

- Start by lying on your back or reclining in a chair in a relaxed position. Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This will allow you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose, letting your rib cage widen and your abdomen expand.
- As you breathe out through your mouth, allow your abdomen and chest to fall. Exhale completely.
- Remember to breathe slowly. Do not force your breathing.
- Practice this for 3-5 deep breaths 3-5 x/day.
- Use diaphragmatic breathing when you are trying to fall asleep to help calm your body and brain. Focus your attention to the slow rhythmic breathing- perhaps counting your breaths up to 10 and then down from 10.

