



# Breathing techniques

## Diaphragmatic Breathing

### 1. Sitting

- Sit up straight, relaxing your body and releasing any tension;
- Inhale and exhale through your nose;
- Place one hand over your belly button, place the other on your chest;
- As you inhale, allow your belly to expand like a balloon. Imagine all the air is going to the bottom of your lungs and down into your belly. Notice how the hand on your belly moves out;
- As you exhale, pull your belly back in until all the air has left your lungs;
- When breathing with the diaphragm, the hand on your chest moves very little, if at all. If you feel movement in your chest or your shoulders are lifting, then you are chest breathing.

Practice wherever you sit down – at a table, at your desk, on the commute to work. With repeated practice, your breathing will naturally become slower and deeper.

### 2. Lying down

- Lie down on your back, relaxing your body and easing any tension;
- Inhale and exhale through your nose;
- Place one hand over your navel area, the other hand on your chest;
- As you inhale, allow your belly to expand and notice your hand lifting. As you exhale, feel how the belly slowly lowers your hand. The hand on your chest should move little, if at all;
- You can also try this with a book resting on your belly, noticing how it moves upwards and downwards with the rhythm of your breath.

Practice each night when you go to bed. This can help you fall asleep more quickly, sleep more deeply and wake up feeling more refreshed.

## Relaxed Breathing

- Sit or lie down comfortably, with eyes closed if you wish;
- Breathe *slowly* and *steadily* in through your nose for a count of 4;
- Hold your breath for a count of 2;
- Breathe out *slowly* and *steadily* for a count of 4;
- Repeat for a few minutes.

## **The Whisper Breath**

- Breathe in and out through your nose, exhaling in a way that sounds like you are whispering to someone (or like the sound of sighing gently);
- Each time you breathe in and out, aim to narrow your airway as air flows in and out of your body;
- Continue for 60 seconds or for as long as it feels good to do so.

## **Using the Voice with the Breath (Humming)**

- With teeth together, lips together;
- Inhale a full breath
- As you exhale, hum the sound of 'M' ... mmmmmmmmmmmmm ... for the duration of the breath
- Aim to exhale for as long as it feels comfortable.

This breathing exercise clears the mind, stimulates the Vagus Nerve and induces relaxation.