



## Relaxing Breathing

Basic parts common in all area of relaxation:

- A quiet place.
- A comfortable position: sitting or lying, but not one where you will fall asleep.
- An area of focus.
- Letting go of distractions.

### **Breathing from the diaphragm, Exercise #1:**

The diaphragm is the muscle below the lungs. As the muscle contracts it is pulled down and creates a larger space for the lungs to expand. As the muscle relaxes the lungs go back to their normal state. If you are breathing this way the abdominal muscles rise and fall more than the chest. When we are overstressed our breathing is shallower and comes from the chest. When your breathing is shallow the chest muscles rise and fall more than the abdomen. Place one hand on your chest and one on your abdomen and feel which one rises and falls most. Don't judge yourself: just observe the breath. Do this for one minute. Now leave one hand on your abdomen and bring your focus to allowing the abdomen to rise as you breathe in and fall naturally as you breathe out. Take at least 5 minutes out of your day to relax your breathing. It is better to spend 15 minutes once or twice a day to relax and allow your breathing to relax.

### **Breathing Exercise #2:**

Breathe in for a count of four (counting to yourself). Pause for a count of seven. Breathe out for a count of eight. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. As you breathe out, blow the breath out with your lips like you are blowing out a straw. Start with doing this breathing for up to one minute, daily, for the first week, then increase the exercise to ten minutes over the next three weeks. This type of breathing will slow down the breath and allow the body to use its breathing system the most efficiently. If you find you are light headed, your body will adjust. If the feeling does not pass, exhale completely. The next breath will be a deep breath. The body will not forget to breathe. For the remainder of the time, just observe the breath. Do this practice to allow the body to relax and the mind to focus on the quiet breath.