



Belly Breathing

Belly Breathing is a deep breathing exercise you can use as a coping skill when you have symptoms of anxiety or panic.

- Many of the “scary sensations” of panic – shortness of breath, dizziness, numbness, nausea, trouble swallowing, chest pains – are related to rapid breathing.
- During panic, people breathe from the chest instead of from the belly. Breathing rapidly from the chest increases anxiety. Breathing slowly from the belly lowers anxiety and reduces many of the “scary sensations” of panic.
- It is effective for creating relaxation and clearer thinking.
- Our breathing is related to the thoughts and images that we are currently focusing on, so it is important to change our thinking and imagery to help us relax.

Easy Belly Breathing Steps

1. Close your eyes and relax.

Allow your breathing to gradually become slower and deeper.

2. Practice stress relief breathing.

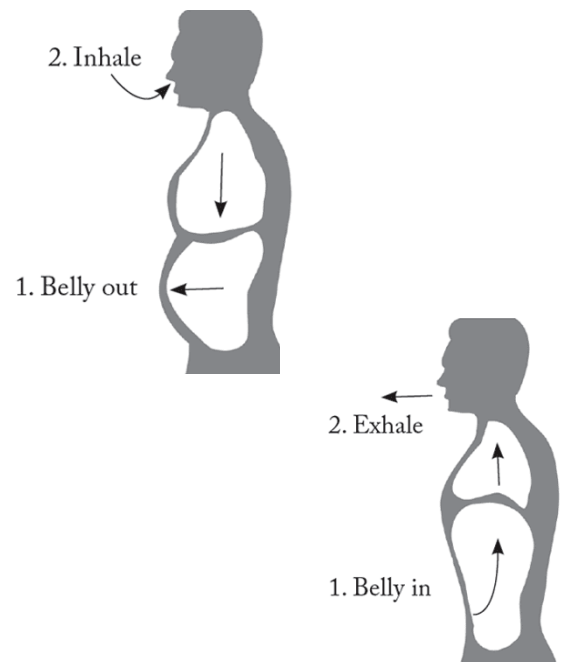
Breathe from your belly instead of from your shoulders or chest. Don't force it, but let your breathing become natural and relaxed. You can practice while lying on your back or sitting up. Place your hand gently on the diaphragm muscle (a strong dome-shaped muscle) located under your ribs and above your stomach. When you breathe in, you push the muscle down and your belly moves forward. When you breathe out, the muscle moves back to resting position and your belly moves back in.

3. Visualize.

Imagine that, with each breath, your body is becoming increasingly calm and loose. With each exhale, your limbs are a little more like cooked spaghetti, your face a little more relaxed and expressionless, your body is more still.

4. Keep breathing.

Practice breathing for 5-10 minutes. Try to practice daily, especially when already calm, so that you are well-practiced when your stress increases. Continuing this exercise can relieve stress and help you return to your activities (and stressors) with a renewed sense of strength and calmness.



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