

Breathing Exercises for Wellbeing

How can breathing exercises improve my wellbeing?

Acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) stress can cause you to have shallow breathing and may increase your body's stress response.

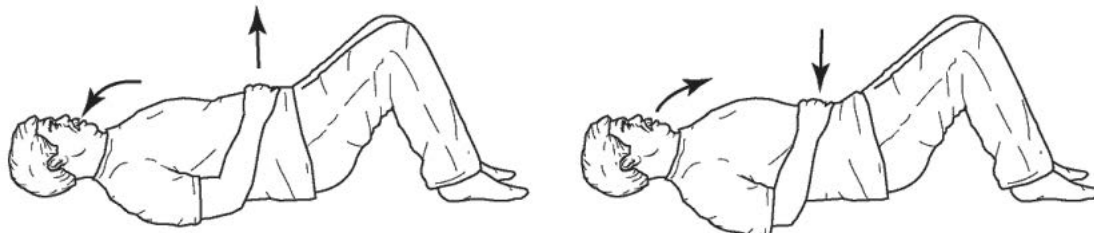
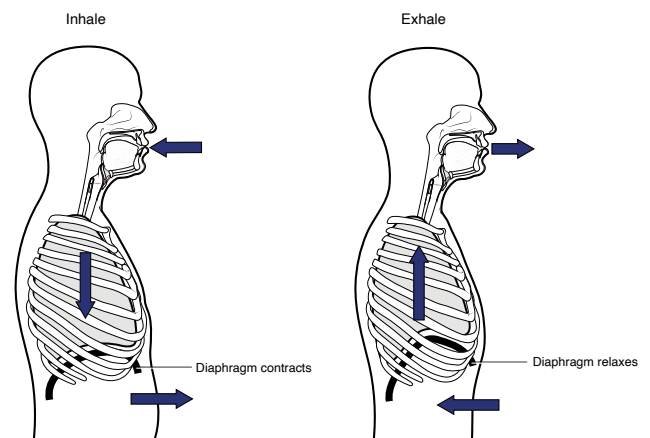
Regular use of certain breathing exercises can help you return to your natural breathing pattern and relax.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Practice this exercise daily to help you relax and offer stress relief.

- Steps for diaphragmatic breathing:

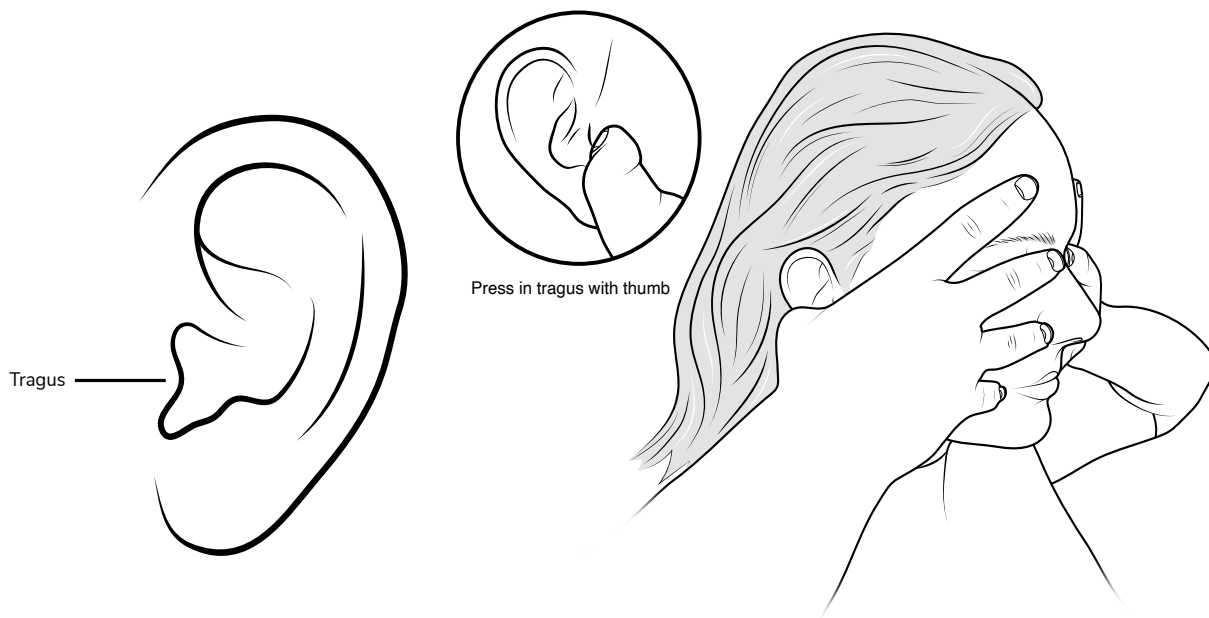
1. Find a comfortable position either sitting or lying down.
2. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen (belly).
3. Take a deep breath through your nose, letting your abdomen rise while keeping your chest still.
4. Slowly let your breath out through your mouth and feel your abdomen fall.
5. Repeat this for several breaths, aiming for a slow and steady rhythm (pace).



This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

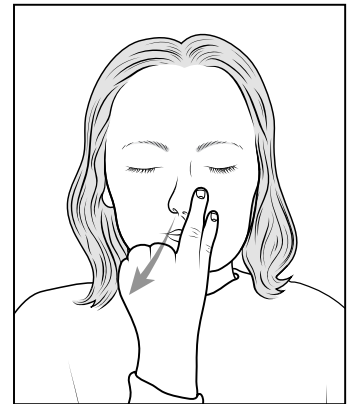
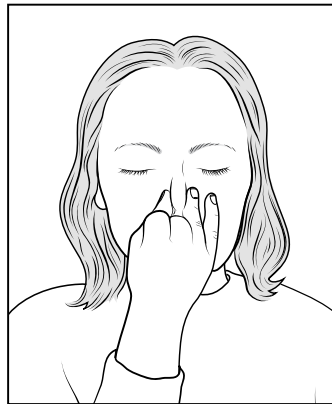
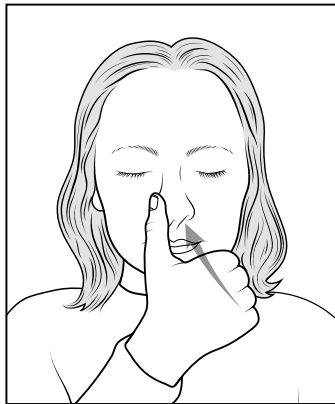
Bee Breath

- Practice this exercise daily to help you relax and offer stress relief.
- Steps for bee breathing:
 1. Sit comfortably in a chair with your back straight and your eyes closed.
 2. Put your thumbs on your ears' cartilage (tragus) and your fingers lightly covering your eyes.
 3. Take a deep breath in through your nose.
 4. Breathe out slowly while making a humming sound like a bee.
 5. Feel the vibration (buzzing) in your head and throat.
 6. Repeat this several times, focusing on the soothing sound and feeling.
 7. Finish with a few normal breaths.



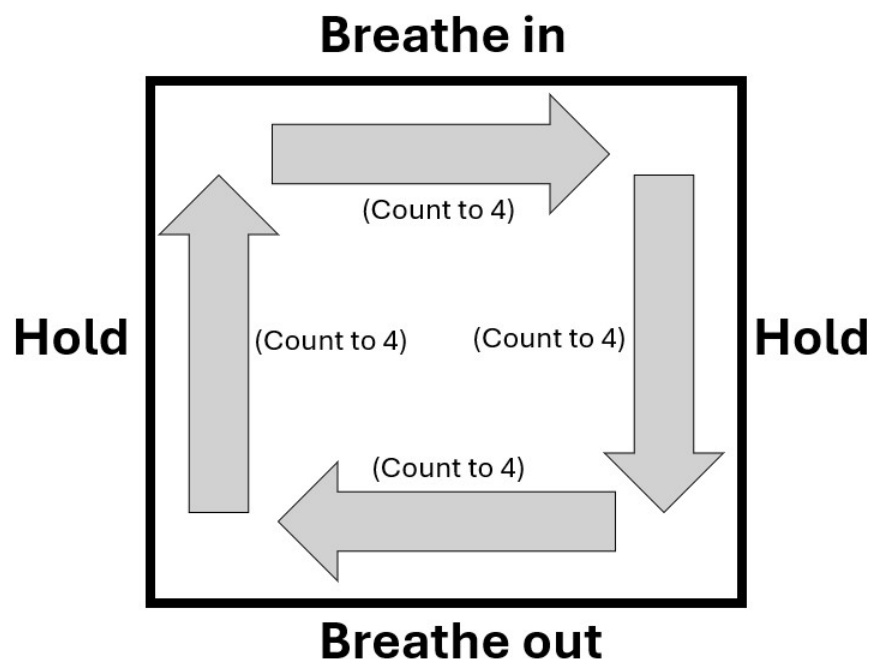
Alternate Nasal Breathing

- Practice this exercise daily to help you relax and offer stress relief.
- Steps for alternate nasal breathing:
 1. Sit comfortably in a chair with your back straight and exhale (breathe out) completely.
 2. Close your right nostril with your right thumb.
 3. Inhale (breathe in) deeply through your left nostril.
 4. Close both nostrils briefly.
 5. Release only your right nostril and exhale (breathe out).
 6. Inhale (breathe in) through your right nostril.
 7. Close both nostrils briefly.
 8. Release only your left nostril and exhale (breathe out).
 9. Repeat steps 3 through 8 several times.
 10. Finish with a few normal breaths.



Box Breathing

- Practice throughout the day as needed to help you relax and offer stress relief.
- Steps for box breathing:
 1. Sit in a chair with your back straight or lie down in a comfortable position.
 2. Take a deep breath in through your nose for 4 counts.
(NOTE: Your counts do not need to be counted in seconds. You can count slower or faster, depending on what feels right for you.)
 3. Hold your breath for 4 counts.
 4. Slowly let your breath out through your mouth for 4 counts.
 5. Hold your breath for 4 counts.
 6. In your mind, try to picture the four sides of the box as you do this exercise.
 7. Focus on counting and the feeling of your breath.



When should I call my health care provider?

Shortness of breath can be a serious problem. Stop any breathing exercises if you have shortness of breath, anxiety or discomfort (pain). It is important to talk to your health care team about any symptoms of shortness of breath you may have. Get emergency help if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain
- Trouble speaking
- Dizziness or weakness
- Wheezing that is new or gets worse