

BREATHING EXERCISES

WHAT ARE BREATHING EXERCISES?

Breathing exercises help you to breathe deeply to release the tension in your diaphragm, chest and shoulders. They are exercises you do with your breath to help manage stress and anxiety and can also help people with asthma and chest infections.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I DO BREATHING EXERCISES?

You can do breathing exercises as often as you wish! Like all exercises, a little bit each day helps you to develop the technique.

HOW LONG SHOULD A BREATHING EXERCISE SESSION TAKE?

In most cases, a breathing exercise session will only take a few moments.

WHEN SHOULD I DO A BREATHING EXERCISE SESSION?

You can do a breathing exercises session any time you wish. They are great to do if you are getting anxious or stress about something – such as before an interview or making a presentation. You can also do them to relax before starting a meditation session.

HOW DO I DO BREATHING EXERCISES?

You can do breathing exercises sitting or standing. The main thing is to ensure that you are not doing something that requires concentration – such as driving – as concentrating on your breath may interfere with this.

There are many different breathing exercises and a search of the internet will turn up a great many for you to try. Here are a couple to get you started.

SOME BREATHING EXERCISES TO TRY

Breathing Exercise 1 – Breathe Out and Relax

When you feel you are becoming stressed or confused, breathe out – breathe long and make sure the lungs are totally empty. Sometimes the first sign of becoming stressed or confused is tenseness or faster breathing – if you notice this, take a big breath and breathe out totally. If you are going to repeat, take a few normal breaths in between or a big breath in – a shallow breath in and a big breath out may leave you feeling dizzy.

Breathing Exercise 2 – 4-4-8

Breathe in for a count of 4.
Hold your breath for a count of 4.
Breathe out for a count of 8.

Be careful not to count too slowly – it will make breathing out for the full count difficult. Repeat as many times as you like.

Breathing Exercise 3 - Deep Breathing

Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Take in a big breath making sure the diaphragm rises (this is below the chest so you should feel some movement in the abdomen as well as the chest). Breathe out fully.

Repeat 6-10 times.