

Instructions

1. Begin by finding a comfortable position (some choices are: a chair with arm supports and feet touching flat to floor or stool; or lying on floor or bed with lower legs supported on pillows and rolled towel in curve of neck).
2. Make sure you will have no interruptions (you may choose to take the phone off the hook). Let others know this is a “DO NOT DISTURB” time.
3. Take your shoes off and loosen tight clothing. Make sure you are not cold.
4. Close your eyes. Place your hands on your stomach.
5. Think to yourself “I am now going to relax by learning how to focus my breathing deep down into my abdomen.
6. Start by taking a big breath in and blowing out with effort so you can hear a sigh of relief. (This can be considered a cleansing breath or a signal to begin your breath). Repeat 2 or 3 times.
7. Now begin to focus on slow deep breathing at your own comfortable pace.
8. When you breathe in (inhale), do so through your nose.
9. When you blow out (exhale), do so through your mouth by pursing your lips.
10. To help you inhale slowly and fully, feel and imagine the air slowly moving down towards the inside of your belly. Feel your stomach rising.
11. To help you exhale slowly, purse your lips and imagine that you are blowing at the flame of candle, making it flicker, but never blowing it out.
12. Continue at your own pace, thinking about breathing in slowly through your nose, so the air fills your abdomen and then slowly breathing out, so you feel your abdomen gently going down as the air is coming up and out through your mouth.
13. Each time you exhale, focus on a body part relaxing, feeling warm and supported, starting with your toes, then moving up your body towards the top of your head.

Important Notes

- Continue for about 10-15 minutes for deep relaxation, then end with a cleansing deep, loud breath.
- Set a timer for 30 minutes in case you fall asleep.
- **With practice, you may notice that taking a few “signal” breaths may help you regain control of the relaxation response.**