

## **Breathing for Stress Relief**

Deep breathing is a simple, yet powerful, relaxation technique. It's easy to learn, can be practiced almost anywhere, and provides a quick way to get your stress levels in check. All you really need is a few minutes to yourself.

### **Practicing deep breathing**

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply into your abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible in your lungs. When you take deep breaths, rather than shallow breaths into your upper chest, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel.

- Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

If you find it difficult breathing from your abdomen while sitting up, try lying on the floor. Put a small book on your stomach, and try to breathe so that the book rises as you inhale and falls as you exhale.