

# Relaxation Breathing

## How do you do breathing exercises?

There are lots of breathing exercises you can do to help relax. The first exercise below-belly breathing-is simple to learn and easy to do. It's best to start there if you have never done breathing exercises before. The other exercises are more advanced. All of these exercises can help you relax and relieve stress.

### Belly breathing

Belly breathing is easy to do and very relaxing. Try this basic exercise anytime you need to relax or relieve stress.

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.

### Next steps

After you have mastered belly breathing, you may want to try one of these more advanced breathing exercises. Try all three, and see which one works best for you:

4-7-8 breathing

Roll breathing

Morning breathing

### 4-7-8 breathing

This exercise also uses belly breathing to help you relax. You can do this exercise either sitting or lying down.

1. To start, put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest as in the belly breathing exercise.
2. Take a deep, slow breath from your belly, and silently count to 4 as you breathe in.
3. Hold your breath, and silently count from 1 to 7.
4. Breathe out completely as you silently count from 1 to 8. Try to get all the air out of your lungs by the time you count to 8.

5. Repeat 3 to 7 times or until you feel calm.

### **Roll breathing**

The object of roll breathing is to develop full use of your lungs and to focus on the rhythm of your breathing. You can do it in any position. But while you are learning, it is best to lie on your back with your knees bent.

1. Put your left hand on your belly and your right hand on your chest. Notice how your hands move as you breathe in and out.
2. Practice filling your lower lungs by breathing so that your "belly" (left) hand goes up when you inhale and your "chest" (right) hand remains still. Always breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Do this 8 to 10 times.
3. When you have filled and emptied your lower lungs 8 to 10 times, add the second step to your breathing: Inhale first into your lower lungs as before, and then continue inhaling into your upper chest. As you do so, your right hand will rise and your left hand will fall a little as your belly falls.
4. As you exhale slowly through your mouth, make a quiet, whooshing sound as first your left hand and then your right hand fall. As you exhale, feel the tension leaving your body as you become more and more relaxed.
5. Practice breathing in and out in this way for 3 to 5 minutes. Notice that the movement of your belly and chest rises and falls like the motion of rolling waves.

Practice roll breathing daily for several weeks until you can do it almost anywhere. You can use it as an instant relaxation tool anytime you need one.

Caution: Some people get dizzy the first few times they try roll breathing. If you begin to breathe too fast or feel lightheaded, slow your breathing. Get up slowly.

### **Morning breathing**

Try this exercise when you first get up in the morning to relieve muscle stiffness and clear clogged breathing passages. Then use it throughout the day to relieve back tension.

1. From a standing position, bend forward from the waist with your knees slightly bent, letting your arms dangle close to the floor.
2. As you inhale slowly and deeply, return to a standing position by rolling up slowly, lifting your head last.
3. Hold your breath for just a few seconds in this standing position.
4. Exhale slowly as you return to the original position, bending forward from the waist.

Source: [www.WebMD.com](http://www.WebMD.com)