

# RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

## Deep Breathing

Individual

If you experience anxiety or stress, you may have heard someone recommend relaxation techniques. There are many types of relaxation techniques that are used to help with anxiety and stress. Everyone is different, and not all relaxation techniques will work for everyone. This resource provides information about one technique, Deep Breathing.

### OVERVIEW



Breathing is the only bodily function that we do both voluntarily and involuntarily, meaning that you breathe on your own without thinking, but are also able to change your breathing when you want to.

During times of stress, there may be changes in the body functions – heart rate rises, sweating occurs, muscles tense, and breathing becomes rapid and shallow.

These physical changes, this can affect how people think and feel. If a person is anxious and their breathing becomes faster, this can make them feel even more anxious. To help get rid of those feelings, individuals can practice deep breathing, also called abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing.



### STEPS

- Be relaxed in a quiet, comfortable place with eyes closed.
- Place one hand on the chest and the other on the stomach.
- First, take a slow, deep breath in through the nose for a count of between 5 and 10. The hand on the stomach should move first and further than the one on the chest. This shows that the diaphragm is pulling air deep into the lungs.
- Next, hold the breath for a count of between 5 and 10, but not so long to be uncomfortable.
- Then exhale slowly through the mouth for a count of between 5 and 10. Gently squeeze the stomach muscles to completely remove the air from the lungs.
- Repeat this cycle four more times for a total of 5 deep breaths.
- Should be done at least twice a day to start, or whenever a person notices signs of anxiety.

