

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic Breathing is a relaxation tool that you can do on your own, anywhere, and at any time, to help yourself to calm down, manage anxiety, or just to gain more focus and/or motivation. This technique is all about engaging your 5 senses as well as activating the parasympathetic nervous system (mind-body connection) to calm the body and focus the mind. Through practicing this relaxation tool regularly, you will find it easier to relax yourself, manage stress and improve sleep. Diaphragmatic Breathing can be used on its own during anxiety provoking situations and/or to facilitate your daily mindfulness or meditation practice.

Step #1: Ground Yourself

1. Smell

Take in a deep breath, what can you smell around you?

2. Touch

What is something soothing you can feel?

3. Hear

What can you hear around you?

4. Taste

What do you taste in your mouth right now?

5. Sight

What do you see right now around you?

Step #4: Remember how your Parasympathetic Nervous System works

- Sympathetic is fight, flight, freeze
- Diaphragmatic breathing activates your parasympathetic response and the Vagus nerve to counteract the sympathetic response

Step #3: Diaphragmatic Breathing Practice

1. Sit comfortably with your feet on the ground.
2. Place your right hand over your heart like you are pledging allegiance.
3. Place your left hand over your belly button.
4. As you inhale push out your belly and try to keep your chest and shoulders from moving.
5. Allow your exhalations to be longer than your inhalations.

Step #4: Process

Don't forget to process and reflect on your experience each time you practice your diaphragmatic breathing. Write down any thoughts, ideas, or insight you may have experienced during this relaxation activity. Over time, try to increase the amount of time, per day, you practice.

Step #5: Reflect on your experience and how you feel now

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