

Deep Breathing

When you are under stress, your muscles tense, and your breathing becomes shallow and rapid. One of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce stress is to breathe deeply and slowly. While this may sound straightforward, most of us do not breathe deeply even under normal circumstances.

Take time to practice deep breathing each day, especially when you are under stress.

Here's how:

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position with your arms and legs uncrossed and your spine straight.
- Begin by breathing in through your nostrils. Count to five, silently saying the word "in" and let your lower abdomen fill with air.
- Then count to five, silently saying the word "out" as you let the air escape through pursed lips.
- Continue deep breathing for two minutes or more each time.

With practice, you will be able to count slowly to ten or higher. You can increase your relaxation if you imagine breathing in ocean air, the scent of flowers, or forest air. Use your imagination.