CORRECT BREATHING Techniques for Deep Relaxation

To enable the body and mind experience a deep parasympathetic (relaxation) response the following exercises should be conducted on a daily basis.

All that is required is to learn to breathe diaphragmatically by seating yourself comfortably in your chair. Sit all the way back so your back is supported. Loosen your clothing so you will be comfortable.

Place your left hand on your chest, (just over your breast bone) and your right hand over your abdomen (over your belly button). Look at your hands as you breathe.
Your left hand over your chest should not be moving as you breathe in and out.
Your right hand over your abdomen, should be moving out as you inhale, and in as you exhale.

**BREATHE IN > BELLY OUT**
**BREATHE OUT > BELLY IN**

Repeat three times and then stop. Do you feel dizzy? If not, good.
If you feel dizzy you are over breathing (hyperventilating).
This means you are putting too much effort into it, early in the procedure.

Make the movements a little more natural...a little less movement out and a little less in.
If you feel dizzy, stop for a while until the dizziness passes.
The initial dizziness should pass after a few practice sessions.

**Note to yourself:**
If your left hand is moving predominantly, or if both hands are rising and falling at the same time, you are breathing with your chest.
Or is the movement of your hands shallow and slow, or shallow and rapid?

Close your mouth; breathe through your nose only. (Yes in and out through the nose only!)
Do not breathe through the mouth, as it tends to promote over breathing.
Breathing through the nose is healthier for you.

The main objective is for your abdomen to rise as you inhale, and to lower as you exhale.
In fact, the air is not filling your abdomen. The air is filling your lungs and when you don't raise your chest your lungs will fill by contraction of the diaphragm. This pushes out your abdomen, giving the impression it is filling with air.

Practice Diaphragmatic breathing at least ten times a day for several weeks. Use it during times of transition, between projects or whenever you feel the need to let go of tension and feel calmer.

**FOR MORE ABOUT HOW TO USE THE TECHNIQUES READ ON.........**
CORRECT BREATHING

TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING ANXIETY AND RELAXING THE BODY

You can use straightforward and simple breathing skills to relieve your body’s stresses and quiet your mind. They will help you to quickly clear unwanted thoughts and let you enjoy an anxiety free mind and a calm body.

Our breathing patterns are medically proven to influence our physical symptoms. During an emergency, our breathing rate and pattern change. Instead of breathing slowly from our lower lungs, we begin to breathe rapidly and shallowly from our upper lungs. If during this time we are not physically exerting ourselves, then it can produce a phenomenon called hyperventilation. This in turn can explain many of the uncomfortable symptoms during panic:

- Dizziness,
- Shortness of breath,
- Lump in the throat,
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet,
- Nausea,
- Confusion.

We’ll call that the Emergency Response.

The good news is that by changing your breathing you can reverse these symptoms.

By shifting your breathing rate and pattern, you can stimulate the body’s parasympathetic response. This is the body’s equally powerful and opposite system to the Emergency Response and is often called the relaxation response.

The table below lists the physical changes that take place in the Relaxation Response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Calming Response (Parasympathetic Response)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- oxygen consumption decreases</td>
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<tr>
<td>- breathing slows</td>
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<tr>
<td>- heart rate slows</td>
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<tr>
<td>- blood pressure decreases</td>
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<tr>
<td>- muscle tension decreases</td>
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<tr>
<td>- growing sense of ease in body, calmness in mind</td>
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Calming Your Breath

People who are anxious tend to breathe in their upper lungs (upper chest) with shallow, rapid breaths, instead of breathing into their lower lungs (lower chest). This is one contribution to hyperventilation: shallow, upper lung breathing.

The three breathing skills that I will describe next start with inhaling into your lower lungs. This is a deeper, slower breath. Below the lungs is a sheet like muscle, the diaphragm, which separates the chest from the abdomen. When you fill your lower lungs with air, the lungs push down on the diaphragm and cause your abdominal region to protrude. Your stomach looks as though it is expanding and contracting with each diaphragmatic breath.

Two kinds of breathing, upper chest (thoracic) above, and lower chest (diaphragmatic) below.

You will now be introduced to three breathing skills. The first breathing skill is called Natural Breathing, or abdominal breathing. In fact, this is a good way to breathe all day long, unless you are involved in physical activity. In other words, you should practice breathing this way all day long, since it provides for sufficient oxygen intake and controls the exhalation of carbon dioxide.

Natural Breathing is very simple and it goes like this:

(As described in a little more detail on page 1)
Natural Breathing

1. Gently and slowly inhale a normal amount of air through your nose, filling only your lower lungs. *(Your stomach will expand while your upper chest remains still.)*
2. Exhale easily.
3. Continue this gentle breathing pattern with a relaxed attitude, concentrating on filling only the lower lungs.

You might first try it with one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. As you inhale gently, your lower hand should rise while your upper hand stays still.

As you see, this breathing pattern is opposite of that which comes automatically during anxious moments. Instead of breathing rapidly and shallowly into the upper lungs, which expands the chest, you breathe gently into the lower lungs, expanding the abdomen.

The second technique is **Deep Diaphragmatic Breathing** and can be used during times when you are feeling anxious or panicky. It is a powerful way to control hyperventilation, slow a rapid heartbeat and promote physical comfort.

Here’s how it goes:

Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Take a long, slow breath in through your nose, first filling your lower lungs, then your upper lungs.
2. Hold your breath to the count of "three."
3. Exhale slowly through your nose or pursed lips, while you relax the muscles in your face, jaw, shoulders, and stomach.

Practice Diaphragmatic breathing at least *ten times a day* for several weeks. Use it during times of transition, between projects or whenever you want to let go of tension and begin to experience a sense of calmness.

This will help you become familiar and comfortable with the process. And use it any time you begin to feel anxiety or panic building. When you need a tool to help you calm down during panic, you will be more familiar and comfortable with the process.
The third technique is called **Calming Counts**. It has two benefits over Diaphragmatic breathing.

1. It takes longer to complete: about 90 seconds instead of 30 seconds. You will be spending that time concentrating on a specific task instead of paying so much attention to your worried thoughts. If you can let time pass without such intense focus on your fearful thoughts, you will have a better chance at controlling those thoughts.

2. Calming Counts, like Natural Breathing and the Calming Breath, help access the Calming Response. That means you will be giving yourself 90 seconds to unwind your body and quiet your thoughts.

Then, after that time has passed, you will be less anxious than you were.

Here’s how this skill works:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Calming Counts</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sit comfortably.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Take a long, deep breath and exhale it slowly while saying the word “relax” silently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Close your eyes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Let yourself take ten natural, easy breaths. Count down with each exhalation, starting with “ten.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. This time, while you are breathing comfortably, notice any tensions, perhaps in your jaw or forehead or stomach. Imagine those tensions loosening.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. When you reach “one,” open your eyes again.</td>
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As you apply these skills, keep two things in mind.

1. Our breathing is dictated in part by our current thoughts, so make sure you also work on letting any negative thoughts go, as well as your breathing, during high anxiety or panic.

2. These skills work to the degree you are willing to concentrate on them.
Put most of your effort into not thinking about anything else -- not your worried thoughts, not what you will do after you finish the breathing skill, not how well you seem to be at this skill -- while you are following the steps of these skills.

These are the 3 proven daily breathing exercises that have helped many sufferers overcome tension, hypertension, anxiety and other psycho-physiological and stress-related disorders.

You may wish to adopt whatever you think appropriate from these options or utilise all of them in daily practice. The empowerment over excessive anxiety states is never more effective than starting to develop the skill of correct breathing.

My recommendation is for you to practice 10 minutes a day minimum, as a preparation for a regular daily practice of meditation. You can expect considerable changes to many aspects of your life. It needs your commitment and the results will definitely come.