

RELAXATION TRAINING

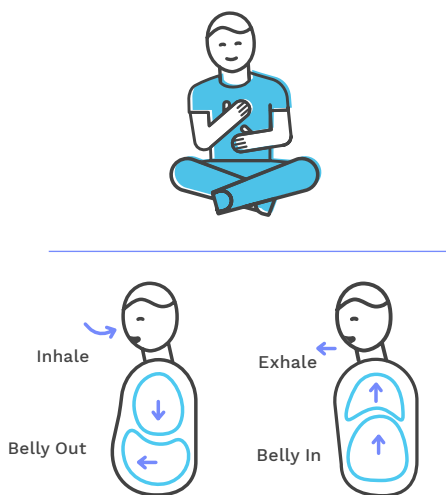
Relaxation training is the practice of intentional relaxation to reduce stress, muscle tension and pain. Deep breathing exercises are great examples of relaxation training.

Deep breathing exercises lower your breathing rate, heart rate and blood pressure. They help decrease muscle tension, increase blood oxygenation and reduce stress hormones by activating the body's natural relaxation response.

Here are some breathing exercises to get started on:

BELLY BREATHING:

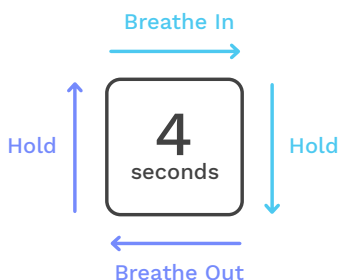
This exercise will help you activate your diaphragm and expand air into the lower portion of your lungs.



- 1 Sit or lie in a comfortable place.
- 2 Close your eyes.
- 3 Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your abdomen. The bottom hand should do the moving. The top hand should remain still or only move as the bottom hand moves.
- 4 Inhale through your nose for about 3- 4 seconds. Feel your abdomen expand. You may feel slight tension the first few times you inhale.
- 5 Hold your breath for 1- 2 seconds.
- 6 Exhale very slowly and steadily through your mouth for about 6 seconds. The mouth should be relaxed.
- 7 Repeat 10 breaths.

BOX BREATHING:

This exercise gets you to slow your breathing rate down by inhaling, holding and exhaling all at the same speed--making a "box" with your breath cycle.



- 1 Breathe out slowly, releasing all the air from your lungs.
- 2 Breathe in through your nose as you slowly count to four in your head. Be conscious of how the air fills your lungs and stomach.
- 3 Hold your breath for a count of four.
- 4 Exhale for another count of four.
- 5 Hold your breath again for a count of four.
- 6 Repeat four rounds of this pattern.

We recommend a 4 second count in each phase of the cycle, but feel free to do whatever count works best for you and progress from there.