

# DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

*What is Diaphragmatic Breathing?* A form of deep breathing that is done by contracting the diaphragm, a muscle located horizontally between the thoracic cavity and abdominal cavity.

*What are the benefits of Diaphragmatic Breathing?* It encourages full oxygen exchange. It helps you relax, lowering the harmful effects of the stress hormone, cortisol, on your body. It can also be beneficial when experiencing anxiety or stress.

## Overview:

There are various forms of diaphragmatic breathing. It can be done lying, sitting or standing. The recommended beginning practitioner position is lying down. Once you become comfortable, you may start to practice the exercise while seated or standing. It is important to note when practicing diaphragmatic breathing in these positions, you should always keep the shoulders, head, and neck relaxed.

## Step by Step instructions:

1. Lying down: Lie down on a flat surface with a pillow under the head and pillows beneath the knees. Pillows will help keep the body in a comfortable position.  
Sitting: Sit in a comfortable chair with back well supported, feet flat on the floor. You can put a pillow behind your lower back if you need the extra support. Shoulders, head, and neck relaxed. Standing: Feet shoulder width apart, back rounded out/not arched. Shoulders, head, and neck relaxed.
2. Place one hand on the middle of the upper chest.
3. Place the other hand on the stomach, just beneath the rib cage but above the diaphragm.
4. To inhale, slowly breathe in through the nose, drawing the breath down toward the stomach. The stomach should push upward against the hand, while the chest remains still.
5. To exhale, tighten the abdominal muscles and let the stomach fall downward while exhaling through pursed lips. Again, the chest should remain still.
6. Continue this for 5–10 minutes at a time
7. Practice around three to four times each day

