

## Deep Breathing

**Deep breathing** or diaphragmatic breathing, is a breath that is done by contracting the diaphragm. The diaphragm is the most efficient muscle used for breathing. It is a large, dome-shaped muscle located at the base of the lungs. Using the abdominal muscles help move the diaphragm which gives us more power to fill and empty the lungs. This action also improves core muscle stability. As we inhale, we bring fresh air in and as we exhale we get carbon dioxide and other gases out of the lungs. This helps increase how much oxygen's in the blood. The brain is very oxygen dependent, using 20% of the body's oxygen supply. By providing larger amounts of oxygen to the executive center of the brain (frontal cortex), this allows for an increased ability to focus, clarity in thinking and relaxation.

### Breathing Procedure Steps

1. Have the participants sit comfortably, being upright with knees bent and feet flat on the ground. Keep shoulders, head and neck relaxed.
2. Place one hand on the upper chest and the other just below the rib cage and above the belly button. This will allow the participant to feel the diaphragm move as they breathe.
3. Use the phrase "Lets smell the roses" to give the participants a cue on initiating the inhalation through the nose. As the participant breathes in slowly through the nose, instruct them to move the stomach out against the hand. The hand on the chest should remain as still as possible.
4. Tighten the stomach muscles, bringing in the belly button toward the spine as the participant exhales slowly through pursed lips. Keep the hand on the upper chest as still as possible.
5. Repeat the breathing cycle five times.
6. When completed, tell the participants to take one more deep breath and to substitute the "exhale" with a big "sigh". The participant will enjoy this fun form of stress relief!

## **Deep Breathing Exercises**

1. Four/Four
2. Trunk Rotations
3. Four/Seven/Eight
4. Lazy Eight's PPT
5. Neck Rotations
6. Four/Four Nasal
7. Twisted Arm (w/ Back Bends)
8. Vowel Breathing

### **1. Four/Four Breathing**

1. Follow the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.
3. Begin with the prompt of "Let's smell the roses", then slowly give a four count of "One and Two and Three and Four".
4. "Hold" (for two seconds).
5. "Now exhale slowly, One and Two and Three and Four".
6. Repeat the breathing cycle five times.
7. Finish by making a big sigh!

### **2. Trunk Breathing**

1. Follow the steps in the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.
3. Have the participants fold their arms across the chest.

4. Tell the participants that they will turning their head and shoulders while inhaling and exhaling upon returning to center. Also physically demonstrate by moving your head and upper body in a slow manner while you are describing the process.
5. Mention the importance of keeping the core and back strong and flexible for proper balance.
6. Begin by telling the participants that we'll begin by "turning our head and shoulders to the right".
7. Then the prompt of "Let's smell the roses" and slowly give the four count of "One and Two and Three and Four".
8. "Hold" (for two seconds).Remind the participants to stretch their back muscles.
9. "Now return to center, one and two and three and four".
- 10.Repeat the breathing cycle to the left.
- 11.Repeat the breathing cycle four more times.
- 12.Finish by making a big sigh!

### **3. Four/Seven/Eight Breathing**

1. Follow the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.
3. Begin with the prompt of "Let's smell the roses", then slowly give a four count of "One and Two and Three and Four"
4. "Hold (gently!)" counting backwards from Seven to One.
5. "Now exhale slowly" (counting backwards from Eight to One).
6. Repeat the breathing cycle Five times.
7. Finish by making a big sigh!

### **4. Lazy 8's PPT Breathing**

1. Follow the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.

3. Tell the participant that they will be making an infinity symbol or a “Lazy Eight” with their hand while inhaling and exhaling. Also physically demonstrate by motioning your hand in a vertical or “Lazy Eight” figure. Inhale while the hand moves to the left, and exhale while the hand moves to the right.
4. Mention the importance of keeping the eyes on the thumbnail as a way to help strengthen the eyes muscles.
5. Have the participant hold one of their arms up to shoulder level with their thumb pointed upward.
6. Begin with the prompt of “Let’s smell the roses” and slowly give a four count of “One and Two and Three and Four” (while keeping the thumb pointed upward).
7. “Hold” (at the intersection point for two seconds).
8. “Now exhale slowly, One and Two and Three and Four”.
9. Repeat the breathing cycle then switch arms for two more breathing cycles (a total of four).
10. Finish by making a big sigh!

### **5. Neck Rotation Breathing**

1. Follow the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.
3. Have the participants fold their arms across the chest.
4. Tell the participants that they will be turning their head while inhaling and exhaling upon returning to center. Also physically demonstrate by moving your head in a slow manner while you are describing the process.
5. Mention the importance of keeping our necks strong and flexible for proper balance.
6. Begin by telling the participant that “we’ll begin by turning our head to the right”.
7. Then give the prompt of “Let’s smell the roses” and slowly give a four count of “ One and Two and Three and Four”
8. “Hold” (for two seconds) and remind the participant to stretch their neck muscles.

9. "Now return to center, One and Two and Three and Four".
10. Repeat the breathing cycle five times.
11. Finish by making a big sigh!

### **6. Four/Four Nasal Breathing**

1. Follow the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.
3. The only difference between Four/Four breathing and Four/Four Nasal breathing is that the exhalation is through the nose rather than through mouth. Remind the participants that is ok to breathe through the mouth if they experience difficulty or are congested.
4. Begin with the prompt "Let's smell the roses", then slowly give a four count of "One and Two and Three and Four".
5. "Hold" (gently for two seconds.)
6. "Now exhale slowly, One and Two and Three and Four".
7. Repeat the breathing cycle five times.
8. Finish by making a Big sigh!

### **7. Twisted Arm (with Back Bends) Breathing**

1. Follow the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.
3. Mention the importance of keeping the core and back strong and flexible for proper balance. Remind the participants on the proper technique on lifting their backs from the flexed position. Tell the participants to be conscious of the pressure on the balls and toes of their feet. Initiate the lifting of the back by the slight pushing of the feet and engagement of the thighs. This technique eliminates any stress on the lower back as the thighs are stronger than the lower back muscles.

4. Have the participants stretch out their arms then cross them at the wrist.
5. Turn palms downward to the floor and keep rotating and interlock the fingers. If a participant has difficulty with the interlocking grip, have them place their palms together or just position the hands together in a “prayer” fashion.
6. Have the participants position their legs at shoulder width.
7. Instruct the participants to place their arms in their lap.
8. Begin with the prompt “Let’s smell the roses” then slowly give a four count of “One and Two and Three and Four”, having the participants bend forward, keeping the elbows inside the legs and stopping at the elbows.
9. “Hold” (for two seconds).
10. Remind the participants to use their thighs and to push off with their feet.
11. While the participant rises slowly, continue with the exhale four count prompt.
12. Repeat the breathing cycle five times.
13. Finish by making a big sigh!

## **8. Vowel Breathing**

1. Follow the deep breathing procedure steps.
2. Guide the participants with their inhaling and exhaling by providing verbal prompts.
3. Have the participants verbalize a single vowel during the exhalation of each breathing cycle. Use vowels A, E, I, O and U.
4. Begin with the prompt of “Let’s smell the roses”, then slowly give a four count of “One and Two and Three and Four”.
5. “Hold” (for two seconds).
6. While exhaling, verbalize a breathy vowel (A, E, I, O and U).
7. Repeat the breathing cycle for each vowel.
8. Finish by making a big sigh!
9. Progression: ask the participants to verbalize the vowels in reverse.

