

Diaphragmatic Breathing

WHAT

It's a fancy word, but a simple thing. Slow, diaphragmatic breathing helps calm our mind—reducing our stress, anxiety, and panic, and increasing our relaxation and comfort. In contrast, shallow and rapid breathing can increase stress, anxiety, and panic. Most students experience the best effects with a breathing rate of about 6 breaths per minute—that's inhaling for 5 seconds and exhaling for 5 seconds.

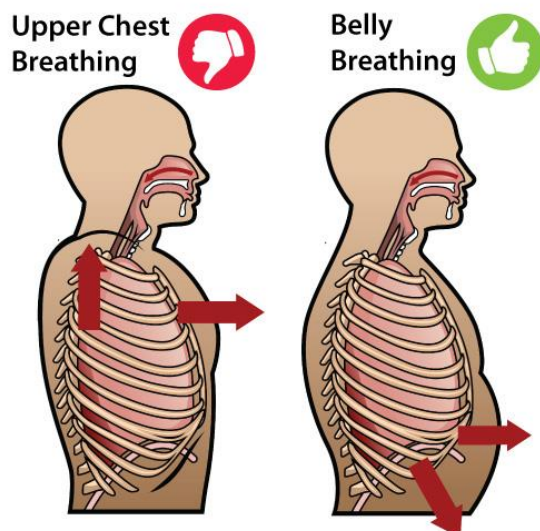
HOW

1. Inhale slowly through your nose for 5 seconds. Let the air fill your stomach. It may be helpful to visualize your lungs filling with air, slowly expanding your stomach.
2. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 5 seconds. Like blowing through a straw.
3. Repeat and practice for 2, 5, or 10 minutes per day.

WHY?

Breathing from your diaphragm is the most efficient method of breathing, interrupts the “fight or flight” response (i.e. stress), and brings maximum oxygen into your body and evacuates maximum CO₂ wastes.

TIPS



Lay on your back and make an effort to breathe from your stomach, not your chest.

Ideally, you learn to pace yourself. However, breath pacing apps are readily available to help you develop these skills.

Remember that each time you breathe using your diaphragm, you are doing something good for your body.

You can strengthen your diaphragm with practice—you can even add resistance by lying on your back with a textbook on top of your diaphragm.