

Diaphragmatic Breathing Technique

1. Lie on your back on a flat surface or in bed with your knees bent and your head supported. You can use a pillow under your knees to support your legs. Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This will allow you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe.



2. Breathe in slowly through your nose so that your stomach moves out against your hand. The goal here is to breathe into the lower portion of your lungs first. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.



3. Tighten your stomach muscles, letting them fall inward as you exhale through pursed lips. The hand on your upper chest should remain as still as possible.



When you first learn the diaphragmatic breathing technique, it may be easier for you to follow the instructions lying down, as shown. As you gain more practice, you can try the diaphragmatic breathing technique while sitting in a chair or going about your daily life.

To perform this exercise while sitting in a chair:

1. Sit comfortably, with your knees bent and your shoulders, head and neck relaxed.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose so that your stomach moves out against your hand. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.
3. Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This will allow you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe.
4. Tighten your stomach muscles, letting them fall inward as you exhale through pursed lips. The hand on your upper chest must remain as still as possible.

How often should I practice this exercise?

At first, practice this exercise 5-10 minutes about 2-3 times per day. Gradually increase the amount of time you spend doing this exercise, and perhaps even increase the effort of the exercise by placing a book on your abdomen.

Expert Tip: If you find it difficult breathing into the lower portion of your lungs, visualize your belly button as your nose and breathe in through your belly button. (Sounds silly, I know. But give it a try!)