

- All breathing exercises are to be done diaphragmatically, that is to say, using the diaphragm and **not the shoulders and chest**, unless otherwise specified. This is easily accomplished by the use of the abdominal muscles in the following way:
  - When exhaling, always contract (pull in) the abdomen.
  - When inhaling, always distend (push out) the abdomen.

It is helpful to practice these before going on to the breath exercises themselves.

- Breathing exercises should be done in a slow, evenly flowing process, paying special attention to making the transition between inhalation and exhalation smooth and even.
- When doing breathing exercises, always sit or stand up straight, feet flat on the floor, balancing the body comfortably.
- Begin all breathing exercises by exhaling all air out of your lungs and pulling in the abdomen at the same time.

#### Exercise 1:

Exhale completely, pulling in the abdominal muscles.

1. Begin a low, gentle inhalation through the nose while slowly and simultaneously distending the abdomen. Imagine that you are breathing in a sense of ease, quiet energy, and well-being. Take this breath down to the bottom of your lungs, allowing your chest to expand slightly. **Do not allow your shoulders to rise.**
2. When your lungs feel full, allow a slow, smooth transition between inhaling and exhaling.
3. Begin to exhale through your mouth slowly, while contracting the abdominal muscles, again remembering **not to move your shoulders**. While exhaling, imagine that you are bringing up from within you any discomfort and muscle tension with your breath. Blow your breath gently away from you through your mouth, allowing a sense of quiet to take over your body.
4. Repeat the above 3 steps twice more.

### Exercise 2:

Exhale completely, pulling in your abdominal muscles.

1. Inhale through your nose slowly, deeply and diaphragmatically. Let your eyes close.
2. When your lungs feel full, allow a slow, smooth transition between inhaling and exhaling.
3. Exhale fully and completely through your nose, making sure to get the last bit of air out of your lungs by contracting your abdominal muscles.
4. Inhale through your nose again. While focusing on your inhalation, picture the number 1 in your mind.
5. Hold your breath for 3 seconds.
6. Exhale slowly and completely while picturing the number 2.
7. Inhale, picturing the number 3 and focusing on your inhalation.
8. Hold your breath for 3 seconds.
9. Exhale slowly, visualizing the number 4.
10. Continue the same process, each time using the next number until you reach the number 8.
11. Focusing on the sense of quiet inside you, slowly let your eyes open.

### Exercise 3:

Exhale completely, pulling in the abdominal muscles.

1. Take a slow, deep, diaphragmatic breath and, as you inhale, say the number 5 to yourself.
2. Exhale slowly, fully and diaphragmatically.
3. Say the number 4 to yourself and inhale.
4. As you exhale, say to yourself: "I am more relaxed now than I was at number 5." Be sure not to rush the thought.
5. Say the number 3 to yourself while inhaling.
6. As you exhale, say to yourself: "I am more relaxed now than than I was at number 4."
7. Continue this process until you have counted down to the number 1.

#### Exercise 4:

Imagine that your lungs are divided horizontally into 3 parts.

1. Take a deep, diaphragmatic breath. Visualize the lowest part of your lungs filled with air. Use only your diaphragm; your chest and shoulders should remain still.
2. Imagine the middle part of your lungs filling with air and, as you visualize the expansion, allow your rib cage to expand.
3. Visualize the upper part of your lungs filling with air and your lungs becoming completely full. Allow your shoulders to rise slightly.
4. Slowly begin to exhale, allowing your shoulders to drop slightly. Visualize the air leaving the top portion of your lungs.
5. Visualize the air leaving the middle portion of your lungs and feel your rib cage contract.
6. Pull in your abdomen to force out the last bit of air from the bottom of your lungs.
7. Repeat the exercise 3 times.

#### MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISE

Think of your muscles in groups (such as all the muscles in your arms, legs, and chest). Focusing on one group of muscles at a time, allow all the tension and discomfort to flow away from these muscles. In order to do this, you may use imagery, autogenic exercises, and breathing exercises in any combination. For example, you may imagine your muscles are being massaged, warmed by a heating pad, smoothed out, or just becoming heavy and loose.

To begin this exercise, find a comfortable position and take three deep but gentle breaths. As described above, focus on each of the following areas in turn and allow all tension and discomfort to flow away from them. Pay special attention to the areas in **boldface**:

1. feet
2. lower legs
3. upper legs, with special attention to **inner thighs**