

Deep Breathing: II

By: Dr. Prentiss Price

After you get comfortable sitting where you are, we'll begin this exercise by taking several nice, long, deep breaths. Gently pull the air in, let it fill your lungs fully... then smoothly let it all out. Do this a few times as you let yourself get more relaxed sitting where you are. Breathe fully in, let the air expand your lungs... then let the air easily flow back out again. While you are taking a few more deep breaths, notice if you are holding any tension in the muscles in your body. You might mentally scan your body, starting with your head. Notice your forehead, your cheeks, your jaw. Are you holding any tension in these areas? If so, just gently let all that tension melt away. Next, take notice of your neck, your shoulders, and upper back. If you are holding any tension here, again, just let all that tension go. Continue to mentally scan your body moving down to your arms and hands, your abdomen, and then your legs and feet. Gently let any tension in these areas just melt away. You might find that some tension creeps back into these muscle groups, that's okay. Just let it all go again with every out breath. Each time you breathe out, let more and more tension leave your body. For a few more moments, bring your attention to your breathing... in and out. And, with every out-breath, let more and more tension melt away from your body.

As you are letting yourself become more relaxed sitting where you are, bring your attention to your breathing and begin to *really* notice how it feels. As you inhale, notice the cool air smoothly coming in through your nose or mouth, how it feels as it passes through your windpipe, gently filling your lungs. Notice the pause between the moment your lungs have fully filled with air, and the moment just before you exhale. Then notice how good it feels to let your full lungs collapse, and how the warm air easily passes back through your windpipe and out through your nose or mouth. Likewise, notice that brief pause between the moment you fully exhale, and just before you inhale again. Bring your attention to your breathing... in and out... in and out. Notice the cool air coming in... filling your lungs... and the warm, soothing air flowing back out. With every out-breath, let more and more tension melt away. Noticing your breathing... in and out... in and out. If your mind wanders, that's okay, just gently bring your attention back to your breathing... in and out. Cool air coming in... filling your lungs... and the warm air gently flowing back out... in and out... in and out.

As you attend to your breathing, you might also begin to say a soothing word to yourself for the in-breath, and also for the out-breath. As you breathe in, you might say to yourself, "peace." As you breathe out, you might say, "release." On the in-breath "peace," and on the out-breath "release." Peace... release... peace... release. Bring your attention to your breathing... in and out. Peace... release... peace... release. If your mind wanders, that's okay, just gently bring your attention back to your breathing... in and out... in and out... in and out. With every out-breath, let more and more tension leave your body. Notice the cool air coming in... filling your lungs... and the warm, soothing air going back out. Bring your attention to your breathing... in and out... in and out... in and out. Continue this attention to your breathing for as long as you feel comfortable. And, when you feel ready, you can gently bring your attention back to the room while still letting yourself feel nice and comfortable and relaxed sitting where you are... noticing your breathing... in and out... in and out... in and out.

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