

# Breathing Exercises

## Where to do the exercises?

Lying in bed (either legs relaxed down or knees bent with your feet on the bed).  
Sitting in a relaxed position with your back supported.

Do not do the exercises when driving.

## When to do the exercises?

Whenever feels best for you, for example:

- First thing in the morning.
- Throughout the day as a break from work or activities.
- Before your evening meal.
- Before bed.
- If you can't sleep.

Stop the exercises if you feel light headed or feel discomfort in your back or ribs.

## Abdominal (Belly) Breathing

1. Either lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the bed, or sit in a relaxed and comfortable position.
2. Place the palm of one hand on your sternum (chest bone) and the other on your belly button.
3. The aim is to only move the hand over your belly button, the hand over your chest bone should stay still.
4. As you take a deep breath in, try to breathe all the way down to the bottom of your lungs, so your belly hand moves outwards.
5. As you breathe out, the hand over your belly should move in towards your spine.
6. Repeat for up to 10 breaths.
7. As you do this more frequently, you can increase the number of repetitions you do.

## Box breathing:

This exercises counts breaths up to four.

1. Breathe in-2-3-4
2. Hold-2-3-4
3. Breathe out-2-3-4
4. Hold-2-3-4
5. Repeat up to 10 times. Gradually increase the repetitions as much as comfortable.

## **Wine Glass Arms**

This can be done sitting or standing.

1. As you take a deep breath in, raise your arms out to the side and over your head (in a wine glass shape).
2. As you breathe out, relax your arms by your side.
3. Repeat 5 times. Gradually increase the repetitions as much as comfortable.

There is a video of this exercise on our YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY6tKm-KTHg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY6tKm-KTHg)

## **Breath Focus**

This is a particularly relaxing breathing exercise.

1. Sit down comfortably or lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the bed.
2. Notice your breathing, while not changing it at all. Count five breaths.
3. Now try to breathe deeply for five breaths, feeling your belly lift as you breathe down into the bottom of your lungs.
4. Next, breathe normally for five breaths and notice how it feels compared to the deep breathing.
5. Repeat both sets three times in total, or for as long as comfortable.

## **Cat Stretch Against a Wall**

This is a modified version of the cat stretch you can do on all fours on the floor.

1. Stand facing a wall and place your palms against the wall, around shoulder height.
2. Breathe in to prepare.
3. As you breathe out, slowly look down towards the floor and slump your back slightly.
4. Then breathe in and gently look up towards the ceiling and arch your back the other way (moving your chest towards the wall).
5. Repeat up to five times if comfortable.

You can make this exercise stronger by holding each position for a couple of breaths. Stop if it causes any pain or discomfort.