

ABDOMINAL BREATHING



By changing the quality and quantity of our breathing, we can consciously exert an influence on the way we feel.



Breathing from your belly

Place one hand on your belly and place the other hand on your chest. When breathing in, you feel your belly rise and when breathing out, you feel your belly become flat again while your abdominal muscles tighten. The chest only moves up and down to a limited extent.

Respiratory rate

A calm abdominal breathing lowers the respiratory rate, which is a signal to your body that it can relax.



Baseline measurement: how many times do you breathe per minute?

4-6 Very good, relaxed

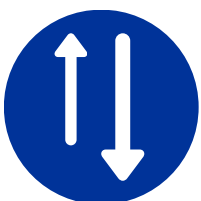
7-10 Good

>10 Too frequent, stressed

Exercise: to breathe 6 times per minute, you can inhale during 4 seconds and exhale during 6 seconds. This breathing might not feel comfortable at first. Don't force yourself but work up to it slowly.

Breathing out > breathing in

When exhaling longer than inhaling, there is a stronger activation of the parasympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system, meaning our body tends to a state of rest.



For example: 4 to 8 seconds inhalation, 2 to 6 seconds holding in your breath, 6 to 10 seconds exhalation. You can count inside your head, if you wish to.



Breathing in through the nose

Abdominal breathing is stimulated when you breathe in through your nose. In doing so, your nose acts as a filter; the little hairs at the inside of your nostrils will purify the incoming air by blocking dust particles.



Practice makes perfect

Tip: practice this abdominal breathing at least once a day for a few minutes in a quiet environment. After this, you can apply this relaxation exercise more easily in a stressful situation.

The easiest way to practise the abdominal breathing technique is when sitting or laying down.



Digital applications

Breathe Easy - Paced Breathing

Through this simple app, you are visually guided to perform the breathing exercise. When the little ball gets bigger, you breathe in. When the ball gets smaller, you breathe out. You can set how long you want to inhale and exhale and the duration of the interval between inhaling and exhaling.

