
Information from your Patient Aligned Care Team

Deep Breathing

What Is Deep Breathing?

Deep breathing involves using your diaphragm muscle to help bring about a state of physiological relaxation. The diaphragm is a large muscle that rests across the bottom of your rib cage. When you inhale, the diaphragm muscle drops, opening up space so air can come in. When watching someone do this it looks like your stomach is filling with air. This type of breathing helps activate the part of your nervous system that controls relaxation. It can lead to decreased heart rate, blood pressure, decreased muscle tension, and overall feelings of relaxation. It is also something you can do quickly and easily, most anyplace.

Why Be Concerned With How I'm Breathing?

- To increase your awareness of the role that breathing plays in increased physical tension and in contributing to increasing your body's stress response.
- To lower your level of stress-related arousal and tension.
- To give you a method of taking calm, relaxing breaths to break the cycle of increasing arousal during stressful situations.

What Is the Best Way To Use Deep Breathing Exercises?

- Use deep breathing frequently.
- Take deep breaths at the first signs of stress, anxiety, physical tension, or other symptoms.
- Schedule time for relaxation. My scheduled time for deep breathing will be _____.

Reference

Hunter, C. L., Goodie, J. L., Oordt, M. S., & Dobmeyer, A. C. (2009). *Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care: Step-by-step Guidance for Assessment and Intervention*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.