



DEEP BREATHING

Deep breathing is a simple and effective way to relieve tension and increase comfort. You can use deep breathing to feel less tense before something that you are anxious about. It can help you feel more comfortable if you are fatigued, nauseated, or in pain.

Use deep breathing to feel more relaxed whenever you are stressed.

For example, deep breathing exercises can help you to relax before you go to sleep, or fall back asleep if you awaken in the middle of the night.

You can also practice deep breathing exercises standing – e.g. while sitting in traffic, waiting for an appointment.

You can learn this technique in just a few minutes:

1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Do not cross your arms or legs.
2. Place the palm of one hand on the middle of your chest. Place your other palm on your abdomen (the area between the bottom of your ribcage and your navel.)
3. Breathe as you normally do. Feel the rise and fall of your hands as you breathe in and out.
4. Imagine now as you breathe in that your stomach is a balloon that inflates, raising your hand that is resting on your abdomen. As you breathe out, the balloon should deflate and your hand should fall. (The first few times you try this, it may be helpful to push your abdomen in gently with your hand as you breathe out.)
5. Keep breathing from your abdomen for a few minutes. To stay focused on your breathing, silently count each time you breathe in (“1...2...3...”) and say “relax” to yourself each time you breathe out. As you breathe from your abdomen, you will feel the comfort that comes from being able to control your breathing.

Practice deep breathing at least 5 minutes a day if you can. As you develop this skill, you may not need to always to Step number 2.

(Adapted from H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Centre & Research Institute, [Coping with chemotherapy](#), 2003, Florida, U.S.A.)