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Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing is the most effective & natural activity for helping with anxiety, panic attacks, grounding, mindfulness, & pain.

Diaphragmatic Breathing is:

- Breathing is the bodies most natural and most effective form of anxiety regulation.
- We get the oxygen we need to think clearly & fuel our muscles for performance. We also expel CO2.
- Oxygen is the ingredient we need to heal our body.
- It is a wonderful "grounding" technique for people suffering from PTSD or high anxiety or for when our thoughts begin to get away from us.
- It is a mindfulness technique.
- It creates a space between "stimulus" and "response" so that we can think before acting. The path to change is in acting mindfully rather than simply responding how we always have.
- By breathing with our belly, we keep our centre of gravity low allowing us to feel steady and secure.
- It minimises tension in our muscles - particularly the shoulders.
- It helps to down regulate our heightened emotions.

Don't just breathe when emotions or stress is heightened:

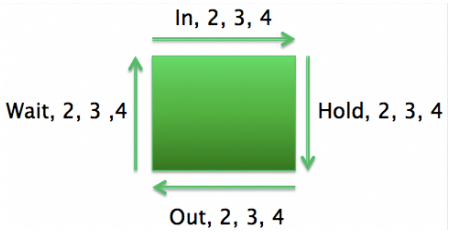
- Maintenance - Breathe regularly throughout the day to maintain a relaxed state of mind.
- Breathe in preparation for upcoming stressful events.
- Stress signatures – if there are events you know create anxiety for you (e.g., a first date, an exam, an interview) prepare yourself by completing several cycles of diaphragmatic breathing in preparation.

Begin by:

1. Lying down or sitting comfortably, with your knees bent and your shoulders, head and neck relaxed.
2. Place one hand on your upper chest and the other on your stomach.
3. Breathing In - Slowly breathe in so that your stomach moves out against your hand. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.
4. Breathe in for a count of four from completely empty to completely full. You should feel a stretch across your stomach.

5. Breathing Out - Let your stomach muscles fall inward as you exhale. The hand on your upper chest should remain as still as possible.
6. Breathe out for a count of four from completely full to completely empty. Force all of the air out of your lungs by pulling your stomach in.

7. Once you have the action of diaphragmatic breathing down, you can use it wherever you are, standing, sitting, driving.
8. Follow the below cadence for breathing once you have the action of diaphragmatic breathing down:



- Start with breathing in.
- Complete at least 4 cycles.
- You can also experiment with breathing in & out for a count of 8 & forget the hold and wait actions.