

Deep Breathing for Stress Management

Why is stress management important?

Stress is a normal, natural part of life. Between work, family, and other responsibilities, life can sometimes get hectic. However, if left unchecked, chronic stress levels may increase our risk of harmful health conditions, like high blood pressure, fatigue, or a weakened immune system. Therefore, it is important to manage our stress on a regular basis. Deep breathing is a simple technique to combat stress and feelings of anxiety.

How can deep breathing be helpful?

Deep breathing works to decrease stress by allowing the mind to clear and focus only on the breath. The physical movement of deep breathing also creates physiological changes in the nervous system that promote feelings of relaxation.

Deep Breathing:

Although you can practice deep breathing anywhere, at any time, it works best if you can choose a quiet place nearby where you will not be interrupted for a few minutes.

Find a comfortable sitting position. You can sit on a chair with your feet flat on the ground, or you can sit on the floor with your legs gently crossed. You may also stand, if that is most appropriate for you. During your deep breathing exercise, be sure to count each breath. This will help to focus your mind so that you do not feel the stress of other things during this exercise. Begin by closing your eyes and take a big deep breath in through your nose. Exhale through your mouth. On your next inhale, try to breath in slowly and focus your attention on expanding your chest first, then your belly. Allow the air to fill you all the way, so that your belly physically extends outwards. When you are ready to exhale, slowly breath the air out through your mouth. Continue this deep breathing pattern for at least 10 breaths, counting each one. When you are ready, open your eyes and take note of how you feel afterwards. You will likely feel relaxed and centered. Make this simple exercise a part of your regular routine to help you manage your stress and feel calm and happy throughout your day.



Photo: <https://www.dignityhealth.org/articles/how-deep-breathing-exercises-can-help-alleviate-stress-and-mild-anxiety>