

Take a Breath

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Diaphragmatic breathing or belly breathing is an important technique to learn. It can help to settle and quiet your brain, resulting in relaxation of your muscles.

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped muscle at the bottom of your rib cage. It is the most efficient muscle for breathing and relaxing. Learning to use your diaphragm more efficiently has many benefits. It can help in relieving stress, relaxing tight muscles and assisting with proper exercise.

To begin diaphragmatic breathing:

1. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen/belly.
2. Take a deep breath in or inhale through your nose and feel the abdomen expand and the chest and shoulders stay relaxed.
3. As you breathe out or exhale through your mouth, allow the abdomen to fall.
4. Breathe slowly and inhale for 3–5 seconds and exhale for 4–6 seconds.

Once this becomes easy for you, it can be used to aide relaxation to fall sleep; when you are experiencing pain, especially with movement; or to help during a stressful event.

Breathing can also be used during exercise. Taking a breath before you do the strenuous part of an exercise, and then exhaling through your mouth with the exertion, will help decrease the pressure in the abdomen. Too much pressure in the abdomen is stressful on your internal organs. Diaphragmatically breathing has benefits for you in many ways, so always remember to concentrate on **BREATHING**.

WPTI physical therapists are trained to evaluate your abdominal musculature and provide instruction in proper diaphragmatic breathing. Call today for an evaluation!