

DEEP BREATHING

First, start by becoming aware of your breathing... Place one hand on your abdomen at the waistline and the other hand on the center of your chest. Without trying to change anything, simply notice how you are breathing. Notice *where* you are breathing from... whether your shoulders are rising and falling, whether your chest is rising and falling, or perhaps your belly is rising and falling. Notice how your hands move as you breathe... (PAUSE)

Now notice the rate of your breathing. Are you breathing rapidly or slowly? Are you breathing deeply or more shallow? (PAUSE)

Now as you slowly inhale, imagine the air flowing deeper into your belly. Feel your belly fill with air as your lower hand rises. Pause at the top of your breath, and then follow your breath out as you completely exhale... Slowly take a breath in... 2, 3, 4... and slowly exhale... 2, 3, 4. Let any tension melt away as you relax more deeply with each breath... (PAUSE)

Notice how the air feels, as cool fresh air enters your nose, passes through the little hairs in your nasal passage, reaches the back of your throat, and descends deep into your lungs. Notice what happens as that breath of fresh air enters your lungs. Notice what happens when you exhale. Feel the temperature of each breath, cool as you inhale, and warm as you exhale. Count your breaths as you breathe in and out.

Notice your breath becoming smooth and slow. Feel your belly and ribcage expand outward with each breath... and feel yourself become more relaxed with each exhale. Allow your shoulders to become heavier with each exhale... (PAUSE 15 sec)

Continue breathing slowly and gently... (PAUSE 15 sec)

As you breathe, notice the cool temperature of the air, as it enters your nose or mouth. Notice how the air becomes warmer as you follow it deep into your belly and out through your mouth.

Continue breathing slowly and gently... (PAUSE 15 sec)

Again, slowly take a breath in... 2, 3, 4... and slowly exhale... 2, 3, 4. Feel yourself become more and more relaxed with each exhale... (PAUSE 15 sec)

(Skip if going on to other relaxation exercises)

Now, as I count from 5 to 1, feel yourself become more alert... 5 bringing your attention to this room... 4 feeling calm and relaxed... 3 start to wiggle your fingers and toes... 2 slowly start to move and stretch your muscles... 1 open your eyes, feeling refreshed and rejuvenated.