

## **BREATH THERAPY**

We recommend you practice the different techniques till they become easily remembered. The more you practice the greater the benefits. It is suggested in the early learning period of getting use to the techniques to practice every day for up to 20 minutes. Start with 5 minutes building up the practice to 20 minutes over a period of several weeks. Go steady and don't strain. If at any time you feel tired or out of breath stop and rest. If you start to feel light headed or dizzy stop and rest and wait till the sensations have receded before attempting to stand up. **CAUTION**, if you have high blood pressure that is not controlled it is better to avoid holding the breath. Simply go straight into the exhale.

### **A SAFETY NOTE**

These techniques can be used anytime anywhere. Exceptions are DO NOT use when driving or operating machinery or household appliances that require you to be fully alert in their use.

### **A QUICK CLEANSING BREATH**

Use as a good practise to quickly release tension and anxious moments. Useful to practice before retiring to bed to help release the stressors of the day.

1. Inhale deeply through the nose to a count of 4(Smell the Roses), hold the breath for a count of 2
2. Exhale out by blowing through pursed lips for a count of 8(blow out the candles)
3. Repeat steps 1&2 a total of three times

Now go for some deep sighs

4. On each audible sigh allow the shoulders to droop down and the chin to drop on to the chest

Imagine you are like a balloon or tyre deflating. Allow yourself to let go into gravity. Think, feel and see the tension releasing. Refocus.

**NOTE:** If you find the count of 4.2.8 too much, try 3.1.6



Ask your therapist to demonstrate these techniques to aid your understanding of the written handout. If you have any questions please ask your therapist, we are happy to help.

### **A MINDFUL BREATHING EXERCISE**

For one minute close your eyes and watch your breath

Allow yourself to watch its rhythm without any interference or involvement.

Simply notice and observe the sensation of breathing

If you notice your thoughts pull you away from this exercise bring your attention back to your breath

With regular practice you can spend longer doing the exercise. Give yourself permission to practice the exercise and enjoy it to get the most from it.

### **ABDOMINAL BREATHING**

Choose a comfortable position either lying down or sat in a chair. Remove or loosen belts or tight clothing around the abdomen. Place the right hand over the navel and the left hand up on the chest over the sternum. Begin by breathing out completely, then as you inhale expand the abdomen out noticing your right hand rising. Continue to breathe all the way in and allow the lower ribs to expand outwards and finally complete with the upper rib area expanding out the whole of the chest. Notice your left hand rising. The in breath should take approximately 3-4 counts from beginning to completion of the inhale. The hands will have moved right hand first followed by movement of the left. (Smell the Roses). Pause to hold the breath for a count of 1-2 and then begin to breathe out.

On breathing out, allow the chest to sink first, then the lower ribs and finally the abdomen deflates like a balloon. The breath is released evenly and smoothly without any jerking or rush involved. The exhalation should be twice as long as the in breath approximately 6-8 counts. Release out through pursed lips (blowing out the candles). Note the left hand sinking first followed by the right hand at the end of the exhale. To prevent getting out of breath always take a normal breath before starting the next big inhale. Go for 10 deep abdominal breaths to begin training and build up to 20 breaths over a period of time.

To end a session when you are practising laid down it is important to turn onto your right side if possible, for a few moments before coming to a sitting position, this helps normalisation. Give yourself enough time sitting before attempting to stand up. This procedure prevents dizziness.

If your practice has been in a sitting position, then take the time to stretch out the legs and arms to help normalisation and stand up when ready and alert.

### **RAPID RELAXATION**

**Sit comfortably in a back supporting chair. Hands palms up on your lap and feet flat to the floor**

Before beginning this exercise give yourself a score of how relaxed you feel. On a score of 0-100 where 0 represents deeply relaxed and 100 represents extremely tense.

1. Begin with three deep breaths blowing out through the mouth as in the first part of the quick cleansing breath above.
2. Next focus your eyes on a spot on the wall or ceiling. Keep looking at the spot till you feel your eyes becoming heavy and the eye lids want to close. Take a deep breath and as you release the breath allow your eyes to close and drop your inner vision to look down into your abdomen.
3. Now move your focus/attention to your palms using the same breathing technique as in step one on each out breath feel your palms becoming very soft and comfortable repeating the process 3 times.
4. Now move your focus/attention to your feet and again using the same breath technique on each out breath feel the soles of your feet becoming soft and comfortable, repeating the process 3 times. Spend a moment imagining your feet becoming heavy as if sinking into the floor beneath them. Imagine your feet creating an indent into the floor. This is an anchoring technique.
5. Now move your awareness back to your abdomen and observe the natural rise and fall of the abdomen as you naturally breathe in and out.

Sit for as long as you are able to in the relaxed state achieved. If you find your mind becomes more active with thoughts and worries dismiss them by imagining the thoughts as dried up leaves being blown away by a gentle wind till they have blown over an imaginary horizon line. Then return to your feelings of relaxation and enjoy.

Now scan yourself and check in with how relaxed you are now feeling. Give yourself a score and compare it with the score at the beginning. Was there a change?

