

# ABDOMINAL BREATHING



By changing the quality and quantity of our breathing, we can consciously exert an influence on the way we feel.



## Breathing from your belly

Place one hand on your belly and place the other hand on your chest. When breathing in, you feel your belly rise and when breathing out, you feel your belly become flat again while your abdominal muscles tighten. The chest only moves up and down to a limited extent.

## Respiratory rate

A calm abdominal breathing lowers the respiratory rate, which is a signal to your body that it can relax.

**Baseline measurement:** how many times do you breathe per minute?

- 4-6 Very good, relaxed
- 7-10 Good
- >10 Too frequent, stressed

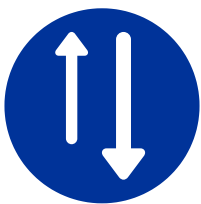


**Exercise:** to breathe 6 times per minute, you can inhale during 4 seconds and exhale during 6 seconds. This breathing might not feel comfortable at first. Don't force yourself but work up to it slowly.

## Breathing out > breathing in

When exhaling longer than inhaling, there is a stronger activation of the parasympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system, meaning our body tends to a state of rest.

**For example:** 4 to 8 seconds inhalation, 2 to 6 seconds holding in your breath, 6 to 10 seconds exhalation. You can count inside your head, if you wish to.





### Breathing in through the nose

Abdominal breathing is stimulated when breathing in through the nose. Further, the nose functions as a filter; the little hairs at the inside of your nose will purify the incoming air by capturing dust particles.

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### Practice makes perfect

**Tip:** practice the abdominal breathing at least once a day for a couple of minutes in a quiet environment. Subsequently, it will be easier to apply this relaxation exercise when being in a stressful situation.

The easiest way to practice the abdominal breathing technique is when sitting or laying down.

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### Digital applications

*Breathe Easy - Paced Breathing*

Via this simple app you are visually guided when executing this breathing exercise. When the ball becomes bigger, you breathe in. When the ball become smaller, you breathe out. You can adjust the settings and decide how long you want to breathe in and how long you want to breathe out.

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