

# Deep Breathing Method

**Deep breathing can help with chronic pain, stress, muscle tension, anxiety, sleep disorders, and other conditions like high blood pressure. It can help to bring a Relaxation Response in your body.**

1. Find a quiet place to sit or lie down.
2. If you are sitting, try not to slouch but make sure you are comfortable. You can use cushions or back rests to help you sit more easily. If you are lying down, place a pillow under your head if you need to. Your face should be parallel to the ceiling and not tilted up or down.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Feel your breath as it comes in through your nose and fills your lungs and then goes back out.
5. Put one hand on your lower belly. Be sure your arm is relaxed and your elbow is resting on the floor or a pillow.
6. As you breathe in (inhale) slowly:
  - let your belly expand like you have a balloon in your belly that expands forward, sideways, backward, upward and downward
  - as your belly expands, feel your lungs fill with air
  - breathe in slowly like this for 4 to 10 counts.
7. As you breathe out (exhale) let your belly relax. Gently let the air in your lungs come out. This should take at least 4 to 10 counts too.
9. As you breathe like this, don't think about other things. Just think about your breathing. If you have other thoughts come up, just gently send them away.
9. Continue to breathe in and out as described in steps 6 and 7 for at least 10 to 20 minutes.
10. You can do the Tense & Relax Method after this deep breathing for more relaxation. Ask your health care provider for a handout on Tense & Relax or other relaxation methods.

