

# Abdominal Breathing Exercise

## What is Abdominal Breathing?

Abdominal breathing, known as diaphragmatic breathing, is a highly efficient breathing technique that engages the diaphragm, a large, dome-shaped muscle located at the base of the lungs. This technique helps optimise breathing by utilising the diaphragm correctly, reducing stress, and enhancing oxygen flow throughout the body.

By practicing diaphragmatic breathing, individuals can:

- Decrease the work of breathing by slowing the breathing rate
- Reduce oxygen demand and therefore promote relaxation
- Use less effort and energy to breathe
- Help alleviate stress, anxiety, and tension
- Remind your nervous system that you are safe

## Abdominal Breathing Technique

1. Find a comfortable position:
  - *Lying down:* Lie on a flat surface or in bed with your knees bent and your head supported. A pillow under your knees can provide additional support.
  - *Sitting:* Sit comfortably in a chair with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, and your shoulders, head, and neck relaxed.
2. Position your hands: Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This helps you feel the movement of your diaphragm as you breathe.
3. Breathe in slowly: Inhale deeply through your nose for about 4 seconds, allowing your stomach to expand outward against your lower hand. Keep the hand on your chest as still as possible.
4. Exhale fully: Tighten your stomach muscles and let them fall inward as you exhale slowly through pursed lips for about 6 seconds. The hand on your chest should remain still while your lower hand moves with your breath.

## How Often Should You Practice?

Start by practicing for **5–10 minutes, 3–4 times per day**. As you become more comfortable, gradually increase the duration. You may find that engaging your diaphragm requires more effort at first. However, with regular practice, diaphragmatic breathing will become easier and feel more natural.