

BREATHING EXERCISES

Use one of these techniques for 1-2 minutes each time you do the breathing exercise.

1. Take a deep breath in and as you breathe out repeat a calming word or phrase to yourself such as "quiet," "still," "relax," "peace," "I am calm," "I am thankful," "I feel relaxed," "I can do this," or some other tension-reducing phrase. (Erickson, K.)

2. Focus on being with each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding the waves of your own breathing. (Kabat-Zinn, J.)

3. Breathe in deeply through your nose while saying in your mind "let"-----pause-----then breathe out slowly through your mouth while saying in your mind "go." As you breathe out, purse your lips as though you were blowing through a straw so your exhalation will be longer than your inhalation. Feel your body letting go of tightness and tension as you breathe out. (Coetzee, S.)

4. Fold your arms across your abdomen. Feel your abdomen rise as you inhale and fall as you exhale. Each time you exhale, feel tension leaving your body and feel yourself sink a little deeper into a pool or relaxation. (Maughan, M.)

5. Imagine that you are holding a baby. Now with your shoulders relaxed, inhale gently so that your abdomen widens. Then as you exhale, purse your lips and very gently and softly blow over the baby's hair. Allow your abdomen to narrow when exhaling. Blow so softly that the baby's hair barely moves. At the same time, imagine that you can allow your breath to flow down and through your legs. Continue imagining that you are gently blowing on the baby's hair while feeling your breath flowing down your legs. Keep blowing very softly and continuously. (Peper, E.)

6. Breathe in deeply through your nose. Breathe out slowly through your mouth pursing your lips as though you were blowing through a straw. Make your out-breath two to three times as long as your in-breath.