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## Deep "Abdominal Breathing" Exercise (For Beginners)

- You can be in either a sitting or lying down position. If sitting, keep your spine erect: sit with your back straight and reach for the sky with the top of your head.
- Place your hands on your abdomen - one above the navel, and one on the navel.
- Breathe in - and focus on "filling your abdomen with air": feel the navel swell out first, then feel your breath slowly rise up into your chest, expanding your entire rib cage.
- As you breathe out, the hand positioned above the navel will sink in first, followed by the lower positioned hand.
- You can now experience deep abdominal breathing taking place.
- Conduct this deep breathing exercise for at least five minutes daily - you'll be pleasantly surprised with the results.
- As you breathe in, count to four, hold for a count of four and release the breath over a four-count. IN..1..2..3..4 HOLD..1..2..3..4 OUT..1..2..3..4.
- Note the wave of relaxation which comes over you.
- Once you have mastered the above exercise and successfully incorporated it into your daily routine, I suggest you proceed to our "Deep Relaxation Exercise".

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## Relaxation Exercises

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To be done daily upon retiring and at least once throughout the day, preferably mid-day to late afternoon. It should generally be done whenever indicated by the presence of tension which is not readily dissipated. Such stress, left unresolved, is one of the leading causes of dysfunction and subsequent disease.

1. Dim or extinguish bright lights (if you wish).
2. Position yourself on your back on a firm surface (the floor does nicely) with knees flexed and your lower legs over a couch or the seat of a chair or simply place a large pillow or rolled blanket under them.
3. Flatten a pillow, rolled towel, sweater or coat, beneath your head and gather it behind your neck to provide comfortable support. This is not necessary if you use a contoured pillow.  
*Many find it useful to have a friend or family member assist them by reading the following instructions the first few times they do this, until they get familiar with it.*
4. Close your eyes and breathe rhythmically. **IN**..1..2..3..4, **HOLD**..1..2..3..4..5..6..7..8, **OUT**.. 1..2..3..4, **HOLD**..1..2..3..4..5..6..7..8, and continue. This alters your brain wave patterns and facilitates relaxation. Concentrate on drawing your breath from deep in your abdomen and lower rib cage. (You should feel your stomach rise high on each deep inspiration).
5. Let your body go limp. Imagine yourself to be a jelly fish floating in a calm clear blue sea, or an angel floating on a fluffy white cloud, as you continue your rhythmic breathing.
6. Now as you inhale start with just your toes and contract the muscles in them firmly, maintaining the contraction for the duration of the eight count, while at the **'HOLD'**, in your breathing. Then relax your toes slowly, as you exhale all of the tension from your body and feel the sensation of relaxation that follows.

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7. Proceed next to contract your toes and foot muscles. Hold them tight for the eight count following your next inhalation, then let them relax slowly as you exhale every bit of tension from your body. Note the soothing wave of relaxation which spreads over you. Continue your slow even breathing.
  8. Now contract your lower legs, feet and toes all together. Hold those calves tight for your eight count, then let them relax and note the feeling of true relaxation as it spreads throughout your lower limbs.
  9. Continue this pattern, adding another adjacent part of your anatomy to the intense contraction with each subsequent cycle, being sure to relax slowly and totally each and every time, noting the spread of wonderful and soothing relaxation.
  10. The last cycle, (there should be approximately 10, including the following parts; toes, feet, calves, thighs, hips/pelvis/buttocks, abdomen/chest, back, shoulders/arms, neck/scalp, face and tongue) with the final addition of the scalp and face, will complete your sequential contraction of every possible muscle and the subsequent relaxation of your entire body.
  11. Lie still when you are done, continuing your rhythmic breathing, and enjoy the sensation of total body relaxation for as long as possible.
  12. This is an excellent time to mentally review "Your Daily Questions" found in the P.E.P. Step "Mental Focus, the Power of Questions".

**Note:**

**One of the keys to total relaxation is concentrating on the contraction of each individual body part and its subsequent relaxation, while keeping your mind clear of all other thoughts. Simply focus on the rhythm of your breathing and the feedback from your various body parts as you consecutively contract and relax each of them.**

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