

## Calm Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing)

### What is calm breathing?

Calm breathing, sometimes called diaphragmatic breathing (breathing from your diaphragm), is a way to slow your breathing and relax your body. Many people use it when they feel stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed.

### How can calm breathing help?

Most of us breathe without thinking about it. When you practice calm breathing, you pay attention to your breath and slow it down on purpose. This can help your body relax from head to toe. Calm breathing may ease symptoms of stress, anxiety, trouble sleeping, and chronic pain. When you're anxious, your breathing often becomes fast and shallow. Calm breathing helps you reset and feel steadier.

### How do I practice calm breathing?

#### Try these steps:

1. Sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the floor. You can also lie down.
2. Rest your hands on your belly.
3. Breathe in slowly. Let your belly rise like you're filling a balloon. Try not to lift your shoulders or breathe into your chest.
4. Breathe out slowly to a count of five. After you exhale, pause for two to three seconds.
5. Try to slow your breathing slightly with each breath.
6. Practice for about 10 minutes.
7. For best results, try this twice a day.

## How can calm breathing help when I'm stressed?

Calm breathing is easy to use and can be done anywhere. It helps you shift your focus, slow your thoughts, and relax your body.

You may find it helpful:

- When you're having trouble falling asleep.
- When you're feeling tense or overwhelmed.
- Before an exam, interview, meeting, or another stressful event.
- When your day feels hectic, and you need a quick reset.

## Where can I learn more?

You can search online for “calm breathing” or “diaphragmatic breathing” to find more information and guided videos.

**For more mental health educational resources, visit [depressioncenter.org/toolkit](https://depressioncenter.org/toolkit).**

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This document provides general educational information developed by the Eisenberg Family Depression Center. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your health care provider if you have questions about your health or treatment options.