

## ABDOMINAL BREATHING

Abdominal breathing means breathing fully from your abdomen or from the bottom of your lungs. It is exactly the reverse of the way you breathe when you're anxious or tense, which is typically shallow and high in your chest. If you're breathing from your abdomen, you can place your hand on your abdomen and see it actually rise each time you inhale. You'll find that abdominal breathing will help you relax any time you are feeling anxious.

To practice abdominal breathing, follow these steps:

1. Place one hand on your abdomen right beneath your rib cage
2. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into the bottom of your lungs. Your chest should move only slightly, while your stomach rises, pushing your hand up.
3. When you've inhaled fully, pause for a moment and then exhale fully through your mouth. Purse your lips and imagine that you are blowing on a hot spoonful of soup. As you exhale, just let yourself go and imagine your entire body going loose and limp. It should take you twice as long to exhale as it did to inhale.
4. In order to fully relax, take and release ten abdominal breaths. (Sometimes it's helpful to silently say to yourself: "Inhale one", "Exhale one", and count up to 10; then repeat). Try to keep your breathing smooth and regular throughout, without gulping in a big breath or exhaling suddenly.