



## **Breathing Exercises to Aid Relaxation**

**Deep breaths, Positive thought, Favourite colour**

### **In brief**

- 1- Take Deep Breaths in and out filling the lower part of your lungs,**
- 2- Think at least one Good Positive Thought/s as you breathe in and think anything you like as you breathe out – your mind can think all those worrying thoughts or not**
- 3- Imagine breathing in a vapour of your favourite colour, and imagine breathing out a vapour of your least favourite colour.**

**You will not need to do this for long to feel more relaxed, even a few breaths can help**

### **In detail**

**Take Deep breaths in and out slowly, filling the bottom of your lungs.**

Usually we don't properly fill the bottoms of our lungs, take deep breaths to fill this part of your lung, focus on pushing out the ribs at the bottom and your belly out, this uses your diaphragm. Yoga breathing is similar to this. Ideally breathe in for a slow count of 7 and out for 11. But don't worry if you can't do it for this long, just aim to breathe in and out as slowly as you can.

There is science behind this, using your diaphragm tugs on the nerve which helps calm you – the vagus nerve. Using just the top part of your lungs and rapid breaths can trigger the fight/flight response, so avoid this.

Once you have your deep breathing pattern going...

As you breathe in think about a positive, happy thought. You can have more than one. Like remembering someone said something nice to you/ smiled/ a sunny day, walk by the sea etc. Whatever makes you feel happy or relaxed.

As you breathe out you can think whatever you like, your brain can think those worrying thoughts or think something good. Sometimes stopping thoughts/your brain is hard, this exercise doesn't stop them but breaks them up. SO as soon as you breathe in again think /trigger your positive thought.

If you are a visual person you can also add colours,

After you get your deep breaths and positive thought going imagine breathing in a vapour of your favourite colour . What is your favourite colour?

Then as you breathe out imagine breathing out a vapour of your least favourite colour. What is this colour?

You don't have to think the colour but the deep breath and positive thought are important.

You can do this exercise any time, sitting or lying is best. Eyes open or closed. You may find you only have to do this for a short time and may notice you feel better, even a minute but try to do a little longer if you have time.

Try doing it several times during the day as well and it will help you feel more relaxed/ less worried or anxious.

Do this before you go to sleep or if you wake up in the middle of the night. If you wake don't worry about going back to sleep but try this, it will help relax you and that is better than lying there worrying or getting frustrated. Breaking up those worrying thoughts helps.

This exercise may seem simple but sometimes simple is best and many people have found it really helps them.

So try it!

**Deep breaths, positive thought, favourite colour**

**(Please note if you are actually having a panic attack these will be too difficult to do, see separate advice sheet for what to do during a panic attack)**