

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

During stressful events the breathing rate increases. By using diaphragmatic breathing the rate can be brought under control.

Diaphragmatic breathing needs to be practiced to gain most benefit. It can be performed at any time and in any place.

- Begin in a comfortable position – sitting, standing or lying down with knees bent and feet flat on the bed.
- Think about your breathing pattern. Think about the speed and depth of your breaths.
- How tense are the muscles at the back of your neck and over your shoulders? Is your jaw clenched? Shoulders hunched? Try and let that tension go.
- Slow down the rate of your breathing. Take time and concentrate.
- Reduce the effort you are using.
- Place your hand(s) gently on your stomach.
- Take an easy, slow, deep breath in through your nose and let the air glide slowly down into your “stomach” and feel your hand(s) rise gently as they rest on your stomach.
- Then breathe/sigh out slowly through your mouth and let the air glide out slowly. Feel your whole body relax as you breathe out. Enjoy that feeling of relaxation.
- Perform 3 or 4 deep breaths in this way, then breathe normally for a minute or so before trying again.
- Practice daily and you will find that you can use diaphragmatic breathing techniques to gain control in a stressful situation.