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Steps to Relaxation: Deep Breathing Exercise

Try this breathing exercise to help improve your emotional and physical health.

- 1 Lie on your back to help shift your breathing to a deeper, abdominal breath.



- 2 Put your hands on your belly and take a deep breath through your mouth or nose. Each time you breathe in, try to push your belly out as much as possible—feel your hands rise as the belly rises. (As opposed to the popular notion that when you take a deep breath you suck in your gut.)



- 3 Hold that breath for a few seconds and then slowly exhale through your mouth. Try to imagine you're exhaling through a straw.



- 4 After that deep breath, take three or four normal breaths.



- 5 Then take another deep breath.



- 6 Continue this for 5 to 10 minutes.



At least while you're still learning, try to practice this form of relaxation during an already quiet time, when you're least stressed.

To learn more about relaxation and meditation, visit the National Institutes of Health website:
<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>