



GUIDE FOR CALMING BREATHS WITH EXHALATION

Please read 'The Benefits' and 'Preparation' information, and familiarise yourself with Abdominal Breathing first, before practising this exercise.

We are often told when we are anxious, tense or emotional to take deep breaths, but this can often make things worse, as carbon dioxide is not being expelled efficiently from our lungs. The calming, letting go part of the breath, is the exhalation.

This is an instantly calming technique, very simple but very effective, using the out breath in a gentle, controlled way, to relax, free and encourage rhythmic breathing. First we will sigh the breath out a few times and then blow gently through pursed lips. Practise regularly and then you will be better prepared to use it at any moment of anxiety or crisis, whenever you need to calm yourself down.

You may like someone to read this script for you.

Only practise 6 of each breaths - or less, at a time at first, have a break and then practise no more than twice more. It is very important that you are aware that doing too many at a time can make you feel light-headed.

PREPARATION This is best practised sitting on a chair so that your shoulders and upper chest can be released, but reclining or lying is fine. There are some tips to help you on the 'Preparation Guide'.

If at any time you feel discomfort or any breathlessness – STOP immediately.

Drop your shoulders, have arms relaxed, hands soft, release your abdomen, soften muscles in your face. Begin with a few Abdominal Breaths, breathing in and out through your nose.

SIGHING BREATH In this practice you breathe in through your nose and then open your mouth and sigh the breath out.

Inhale through your nose, slowly, as fully as comfortable, using no force - open your mouth and sigh the breath out gently, slowly and completely. Do this a few times (remember not more than 6).

Consciously letting go with each soft sigh – feel your shoulders dropping and your body beginning to release tension. Then sit and rest breathing normally before continuing with the Pursed Lip Breath.

PURSED LIPS In this practice, when you breathe out, you purse your lips, as if silently whistling and blow the breath out gently. As if just to flicker a candle flame that's a few inches in front of your mouth, but not hard enough to blow it out.

Inhale through your nose as fully as is comfortable using no force, purse your lips and exhale, blowing the breath out gently, softly and completely. Don't anticipate the end of it, don't cut it short.

Exhaling against a slight restriction you will find the out breath is quite a bit longer than before.

Do this a few times (not more than 6). Allow your shoulders to drop and your body to release any tension.

When you have completed what is right for you, sit quietly observing your breath, the movement of the breath in your body and how you feel.

This Pursed Lip Breath is particularly good to use in anxious situations and also when you cannot sleep.

Saying a word like Calm, Peace, Ease, Relax – concentrating on the word and not on your thoughts, can be very helpful.

Begin to move gently – have a little stretch and when you get up, do so slowly and carefully.