



## **Autoimmune Resource and Research Centre**

### **Information Sheet**

## **Breathing for Relaxation**

Use the following exercises to enhance relaxation and release tension.

### **BREATH COUNTING**

1. Sit or lie in a comfortable position with your arms and legs uncrossed and your spine straight.
2. Breathe in deeply into your abdomen. Let yourself pause before you exhale.
3. As you exhale, count "one" to yourself. As you continue to inhale and exhale, count each exhalation by saying "two ... three ... four".
4. Continue counting your exhalations in sets of four for five to ten minutes.
5. Notice your breathing gradually slowing, your body relaxing, and your mind calming as you practice this breathing meditation.

### **THE RELAXING SIGH**

During the day, you probably catch yourself sighing or yawning. This is generally a sign that you are not getting enough oxygen. Sighing and yawning are your body's way of remedying the situation. A sigh is often accompanied by a sense that things are not quite as they should be and a feeling of tension. Since a sigh actually does release a bit of this tension, you can practice sighing at will as a means of relaxing.

1. Sit or stand up straight.
2. Sigh deeply, letting out a sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs.
3. Don't think about inhaling - just let the air come in naturally.
4. Take eight to twelve of these relaxing sighs and let yourself experience the feeling of relaxation. Repeat whenever you feel the need of it.

### **LETTING GO OF TENSION**

1. Sit comfortably in a chair with your feet on the floor.
2. Breathe in deeply into your abdomen and say to yourself, "breathe in relaxation". Let yourself pause before you exhale.
3. Breathe out from your abdomen and say to yourself, "breathe out tension". Pause before you inhale.
4. Use each inhalation as a moment to become aware of any tension in your body.
5. Use each exhalation as an opportunity to let go of tension.

6. You may find it helpful to use your imagination to picture or feel the relaxation entering and the tension leaving your body.

### **ALTERNATIVE BREATHING**

While this relaxation exercise is generally useful, people suffering from tension or sinus headaches often find it particularly beneficial.

1. Sit in a comfortable position with good posture.
2. Rest the index and second finger of your right hand on your forehead.
3. Close your right nostril with your thumb.
4. Inhale slowly and soundlessly through your left nostril.
5. Close your left nostril with your ring finger and simultaneously open your right nostril by removing your thumb.
6. Exhale slowly and soundlessly and as thoroughly as possible through your right nostril.
7. Inhale through your right nostril.
8. Close your right nostril with your thumb and open your left nostril.
9. Exhale through your left nostril.
10. Inhale through your left nostril.
11. Begin by doing 5 cycles. Then slowly raise the number to from 10 to 25 cycles.

Taken from:-

"The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook" Martha Davis, Elizabeth Robbins Eshelman, Matthew McKay  
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### **ARRC information for patients, carers & Health Professionals**

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