



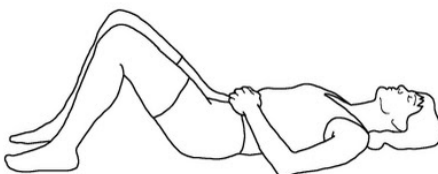
Breathing Practice - Week One

Goals:

1. Intentional practice: Breath diaphragmatically with your visual or audio pacer for 10 minutes 1-2 times a day. Let your breathing be initiated with your belly, and see if you can minimize movement in your chest/shoulders (some movement is ok).
2. Habit practice: Take 2-3 belly breaths every time you become aware of your breathing AND each time you notice increased stress or anxiety

Position for intentional practice:

Lying down (face up) on couch, bed, or floor with knees bent so your abdominal muscles are relaxed



Tips:

- Place a heavy-ish book on your stomach to help you engage your diaphragm. Your diaphragm is a muscle just like any other! A little weight can help strengthen the muscle and help you re-engage it if you are not used to breathing this way
 - Make sure the book is not so heavy that it restricts your breathing
 - If you do not want to use a weighted object, you can place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. The goal is to move your belly hand more than your chest hand
- If you start to feel dizzy, lightheaded, or uncomfortable in any way:
 - Know that this is a NORMAL reaction to changing your breathing, and you are not in danger!
 - Let the pacer be your guide - there is no need to follow it exactly. If you get off track from the pacer, simply find your way back over your next few breaths. There is no need to “get it right” 😊
 - You may be over-breathing, or breathing in and out too much air. Remember, functional breathing does not require large amounts of air in each breath
 - You may be “over-efforting” - see what happens if you “try” less, and instead allow your breathing to happen
 - If after you adjust your breathing you still feel uncomfortable you may either:
 - Be present to the sensations you feel without trying to change anything, and without judging your experience. This is called “mindful awareness”
 - Just take a break! You can go back to this later, there is no need to force yourself.

A final thought: Changing how one breathes can feel very strange and weird at first. The more you practice, the more normal it will feel. Stick with it, your body WILL adjust. Breathing is a habit we are often not aware of consciously (we do it about 24,000 time a day, holy smokes!) so it just takes a little time and practice. You got this.