

### *Complete Natural Breathing*

1. Begin by sitting or standing up straight in a good posture.
2. Breathe through your nose.
3. As you inhale, *first* fill the lower section of your lungs. (Your diaphragm will push your abdomen outward to make room for the air.) *Second*, fill the middle part of your lungs as your lower ribs and chest move forward slightly to accommodate the air. *Third*, fill the upper part of your lungs as you raise your chest slightly and draw in your abdomen a little to support your lungs. (You might imagine you're blowing up a balloon.) These three steps can be performed in one smooth, continuous inhalation, which with practice can be completed in a couple of seconds.
4. Now hold your breath for a few seconds to experience your full lungs.
5. As you slowly exhale, pull your abdomen in slightly and slowly lift it up as your lungs empty. When you have completely exhaled, relax your abdomen and chest.
6. Now and then at the end of the inhalation phase, raise your shoulders and collarbone slightly so that the very top of your shoulders are sure to be replenished with fresh air.

## **2. Breathing To Release Tension**

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 for 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.

## **3. Breathing To Stimulate Alertness**

These exercises can be used to stimulate and tone your entire breathing apparatus and refresh your whole body.

### *Purifying Breath*

This exercise can be practiced by itself or combined with other breathing exercises.

1. Begin by sitting or standing up straight in a good posture.
2. Inhale a complete natural breath.
3. Hold this breath for a few seconds.
4. Pretend that you are blowing through a straw and exhale a little of the air with considerable force through the small opening between your lips. Stop exhaling for a moment and then blow out a bit more air. Continue this procedure until all the air is exhaled in small, forceful puffs.

### *The Windmill*

When you have been bent over your work for several hours and are feeling tense, this exercise will relax you and make you more alert.

1. Stand up straight with your arms out in front of you.
2. Inhale and hold a complete natural breath.