

Deep Breathing Exercises

Deep breathing is an easy way to reduce stress, relieve tension, and increase comfort. Use deep breathing before a stressful event, such as a doctor appointment. If you are agitated, fatigued, nauseated, or in pain, it can help you feel more at ease. You can practise deep breathing exercises while standing, sitting in traffic, or waiting for an appointment. You can learn this technique in just a few minutes.

For a guided practise, we have playlists on Soundcloud - soundcloud.com/phsabc. There are playlists for Mindfulness & Meditation, and Relaxation & Guided Imagery. Listen to them on your mobile device or computer. You can also search for BC Cancer tracks using the free Soundcloud app.

Suggestions:

1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
2. Place the palm of one hand on the centre of your chest. Place your other hand on your stomach. Take a few deeper in-breaths followed by deeper out-breaths if you are tense at the start.
3. Continue to breathe normally. Feel your hands rise and fall as you breathe in and out, in and out, in and out...
4. As you breathe in, visualise your stomach as a balloon. As it fills with air, it raises the hand that is resting on your stomach. As you exhale, the balloon deflates and your hand should fall. When you notice your attention wandering, gently bring it back to your breathing.
5. Continue to breathe from your abdomen for a few minutes. To stay focused on your breathing, silently count each time you breathe in ("1...2...3..."). Each time you breathe out, say to yourself "relax".
6. Notice the sense of calm that follows controlled breathing.
7. Practise deep breathing for at least 5 minutes per day. As you learn this skill, you may not need to perform step 4 every time you practise these deep breathing exercises.