

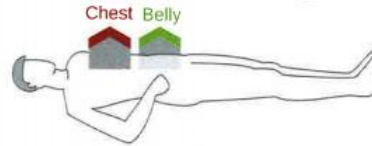
BREATHING

WHAT IS IT?

Breathing more slowly, gently, and deeply helps to calm and relax and can also reduce tension and anxiety and improve concentration and memory. Shallow and fast breathing can contribute to anxiety, muscular tension, panic attacks, headaches, and fatigue. By practicing slow, deep breathing, your mind will calm down and your body will relax. Diaphragmatic, or, abdominal breathing is one of the easiest ways to produce the relaxation response. Practice 10 or more minutes to learn the proper technique for deep relaxation, helping to reduce muscle tension and anxiety. Throughout the day, frequently take slow, deep breaths or do a couple minutes of diaphragmatic breathing, especially when feeling stressed.

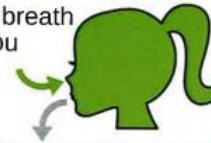
Technique (Diaphragmatic Breathing):

Lie on the floor on your back and place one hand on the center of your chest and the other on your abdomen, right at the waistline. When you breathe in, notice whether your abdomen expands--if it does, you are breathing from your diaphragm. If your belly doesn't move, or moves less than your chest, you are breathing from your chest.



To shift from chest to abdominal breathing, make one or two full exhalations that push out the air from the bottom of your lungs--this creates a vacuum that will pull in deep, diaphragmatic breath on your next inhalation.

TIP: If you are wanting to relax and calm yourself down it is important to breathe **in** through your **nose** and **out** very slowly through your **mouth**. When you breathe out you can purse your lips and breathe out as through blowing through a straw. This will allow you to prolong your exhalation.



BREATHING APPS:



Breath2Relax



Paced Breathing
(only Android)



Universal Breathing:
Pranayama



Prana Breath: Calm
and Meditate



Breathing Zone

MEDITATION



WHAT IS IT?

Meditation is the practice of passively and uncritically focusing attending on the breath, or particular word, phrase, or object and observing thoughts, emotions, and sensations without judgment. The purpose of meditation is often to promote calmness and well-being, detach from anxious thoughts, improve concentration and mental clarity, develop greater self-awareness (among other things). Regular meditation trains the attention and awareness and the ability to be attuned to the present moment.



Benefits:

- Slows down breathing and heart rate for improved health and stress management.
- Can improve academic performance, concentration, reaction time, and memory.
- Used successfully in the treatment of high blood pressure, heart disease, migraine headaches and autoimmune diseases such as diabetes and arthritis.
- Helpful in curtailing obsessive thinking, anxiety, depression, and hostility
- Helpful in developing a flexible relationship with concerns and worries instead of becoming "stuck in" and upset by them
- May enhance empathy towards self and others.



Join us for Time to Meditate!
(Tuesdays 12:10-12:50pm in the Chapel Main Level) or (Fridays 8:15-8:35am AGH Library)

Participate in Koru Meditation Class!
Contact Betsy Lane-Getaz to find out about scheduling and registration.

Come in and practice meditation
(or other relaxation techniques)
at SHAC's new
Biofeedback & Meditation Rooms!

Time to Meditate

TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS



PERFORMANCE REHEARSAL

Performance Rehearsal utilizes the power of visual imagery to **mentally rehearse** and prepare for any potentially stressful situation, such as speaking in public, preparing for and taking an exam, writing a paper, competing in an athletic event, going to a social activity or on a date, or dealing with conflict in a relationship.

Benefit

Mental rehearsal in a relaxed state helps to condition the mind to remain calm and focused and the body to respond with better precision and skill, increasing the ability to be one's best in any situation, including more easily overcoming problems that arise.

Choose an upcoming performance, event, activity, situation, or daily task for which a) Anxiety or stress keeps you from doing or being your best **and/or** b) You want to improve your performance or change your behavior.

Technique:

1. Use any method of deep relaxation that works for you. It can be helpful to become relaxed enough that your subjective level of stress is around 2 on a scale of 0 to 10, 0 feeling no stress and 10 feeling the most stressed.
2. Vividly remember a time you performed well that is similar to the upcoming performance, event, or situation you have chosen to focus on. Notice the feelings of confidence, competence, and accomplishment you felt at that time. Notice the attitudes that helped you achieve it and how your hard work paid off. Take time to really remember and memorize those good feelings.
3. Keep those same attitudes and feelings with you as you visualize the event or situation you have chosen to focus on for this exercise. Vividly imagine yourself calmly and confidently preparing for and approaching the event, situation, or task in the way you want to, seeing yourself feeling and acting your best and performing as you want to. Take time to imagine this fully and completely. Notice details like the setting, people, words spoken, tasks, dangers, etc. See yourself in control, performing your very best, acting and responding in a genuine way, respecting others as well as yourself, expressing your own ideas and opinions clearly, handling disagreements and differences calmly and effectively, and being successful at whatever tasks you need to do.
4. If visualizing the situation brings up anxious feelings, repeat the deep relaxation exercise until you again feel calm and then return in your mind to the event or situation. Repeat as many times as needed to feel calm and confident as you visualize the event or situation.

More Information

Confident Performance Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ5TuNoZ8Wk>
Mental Rehearsal <http://www.yogachicago.com/may08/mentalrehearsal.shtml>

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive Muscle Relaxation involves tensing and relaxing different muscles or muscle groups throughout the body in a systematic way, conditioning the body and the mind to **distinguish tension from relaxation**. Anxiety-provoking thoughts and events produce muscle tension in the body. Deep muscle relaxation reduces physiological tension



CAUTION: Be careful when tensing the muscles in your neck and spine, especially if you have previously injured these areas. Also use caution with feet and toes to avoid cramping.

Technique

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) can be practiced lying down or sitting in a chair. Each muscle or muscle group is tensed for 5 to 7 seconds, and then relaxed for 20 to 30 seconds. If a particular muscle is difficult to relax, you can repeat the procedure of tensing and releasing it up to 5 times. Once this procedure has been mastered you can do a shorthand version in which whole muscle groups are tensed and relaxed simultaneously – such as: all the facial muscles together, or: hands, arms, and shoulders, or: legs, feet and toes.

Procedure:

Begin by taking a few deep breaths from the abdomen. Tense, hold, and relax the following body parts and notice the contrast between a tensed state and a relaxed state. Inhale as you tense, exhale as you relax and let go.

Tense right hand (make a fist)...hold...relax. Tense left hand (make a fist)...hold...relax. Tense both hands...hold...relax. Tense right hand and arm and pull forearm toward body...hold...relax. Tense left hand and arm and pull forearm toward body...hold...relax. Tense both hands and arms and pull forearms toward body...hold...relax. Tense shoulders by raising toward ears...hold...relax. Raise eyebrows and tighten forehead and scalp...hold...relax. Close eyes tight and wrinkle facial muscles...hold...relax. Tense jaw (gently clench teeth) and push tongue to the roof of mouth...hold...relax. Pull stomach muscles in...hold...relax. Tense right leg, flexing thigh and calf muscles, point toes toward face and then away...hold...relax. Tense left leg, flexing thigh and calf muscles, point toes toward face and then away...hold...relax. Tense both legs...hold...relax. Tense entire body...hold...relax.

Notice the sensations of relaxation in your muscles. It may feel like you have just received a massage. Allow your body to relax for a few minutes before getting up and resuming your normal activities.

More Information

Guide to Psychology: <http://www.guidetopsychology.com/pmr.htm>
Inner Health Studio video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFwCKKa--18>

VISUALIZATION

WHAT IS IT?

Visualization uses the power of the imagination to calm the mind and relax the body. Visualization is part of everyday life: recalling memories, daydreaming, thinking about people, places, things, imagining a conversation, etc. Visualizing a peaceful scene or place can relax and rejuvenate the mind and body. Visualization can be an effective way to clear your mind of the clutter of the day and of worries that keep you from falling asleep. It is an integral part of Performance Rehearsals. Visualizing yourself succeeding at an important goal helps to harness the power of your mind to accomplish it.

Benefits:

Visualization is effective for many stress-related and physical illnesses including: headaches, muscle spasms, anxiety, PTSD, and chronic pain. It can be an effective antidote to insomnia by allowing the mind and body to relax-sufficiently to enter a deeper, restorative state of sleep. Visualization can calm and center the mind for improved concentration, memory, and brain power. It can be used to create a safe and peaceful place in the mind for taking a break from a stressful or fearful situation.



Technique:

Fully engaging all of your senses in Visualization makes it more real and powerful. Notice the images that naturally arise in your mind of a peaceful and relaxing scene. Mentally zero in on all aspects of sight: vivid colors, shapes and textures. Add sounds, touch, taste, smell. The more clearly you visualize, the more relaxing and calming it is.

Possible Visualizations:

- Real or imagined places and scenes: Beach, Mountains, etc.
- Favorite relaxing activities
- Peaceful and happy memories with family and friends
- A safe or relaxing room or place
- Images of relaxation like sun warming the body, or melting like wax
- Tension or pain having a shape texture, or color that changes.

Visualization example: Notice your breathing. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. Allow each breath to become a little slower until you feel relaxation spreading through your body. In your mind's eye see a pathway or stairway that will take you step by step to a peaceful, relaxing, safe place in your mind. It can be real or imagined. See the pathway open up to this place, which represents your calm center. Notice what it is about this place that is soothing and relaxing. Notice what you see: the colors, shapes, movements. Feel what it is like to be in this place. Notice the sounds, smells, what you sense and feel. Absorb the peace and tranquility into your mind and body. You may feel the warmth of the sun on your face and body relaxing your muscles. Notice how good it feels to relax and how easy it is to return to this place whenever you want.