

Most people breathe very shallowly, using only the top part of their lungs which tends to lead to tension. Deep breathing uses our entire lungs, providing more oxygen to our bodies, so energizing us.

Lie on your back if possible.

Slowly relax your body, starting with your feet and moving through every part of your body until you have reached -- and relaxed -- your face and scalp. (see above)

Do a quick check to see if you've missed anywhere. If so, relax it.

Slowly begin to breathe in, first filling your lower belly, then your stomach area, and then your chest and the top of your lungs almost up to your shoulders. Hold for a second or two, then begin to breathe out. Empty the very bottom of your lungs first, then the middle, then finally the top.

Continue this breathing for 4 or 5 minutes. Don't force it, do it in a relaxed way.

After a while, imagine that you are resting on a warm, gentle ocean. The sun is shining peacefully on your body. Imagine that you rise on the gentle swells of the water as you inhale, and that you slowly descend as you exhale.

Continue this relaxing breathing as long as you want to.

Deep Breathing

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You may find that instead of counting sheep, you can focus on your breathing, counting up to 3 as you breathe in, holding the breath for the count of 3 then breathing out as you count to 3 again.

Repeating this can be very soothing. If your mind starts to wander, gently bring it back to concentrate on your breathing.