



**Develop the Winner's Mentality, (Xlibris, 2005)**  
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**CHAPTER 9: RELAXATION & ENERGY**

**APPLICATION EXERCISES: BREATHING TECHNIQUES (pg. 164)**

**BELLY BREATHING OR BREATHE LIKE A BABY**

Belly breathing is an *essential* part of relaxation techniques. The Eastern disciplines are centered on proper abdominal breathing; meditation, Yoga, Tai Chi, and all the martial arts begin by stressing belly breathing. Karate teaches that a board can't be broken with the hand unless the breath is proper. It's even said, "The breath breaks the board" before the hand strikes it!

There are two easy methods to practice/learn proper abdominal breathing:

- ▶ Stand with your back straight and place your right hand on your chest and your left hand on your stomach. Breathe so that only the hand on your stomach moves. Take a breathe from your diaphragm, exhale, then relax.
- ▶ Sit in an easy chair, or lie down on a sofa or bed and place a telephone book on your stomach and your right hand on your chest. As you inhale slowly, make sure the book moves and not your hand.

With either technique mentally focus *only* on your breathing. When any distracting thoughts or sounds bother you, just ignore them. Just let them go in one ear and out the other as you go deeper into relaxation.

Most meditative practices suggest that you breathe in through your nose, and exhale through your mouth. For the proper relaxation repose technique, the *exhale* should be twice as long as the *exhale*. For example, try to inhale slowly for a 5 count. Hold the breath for a 3 count, and then exhale slowly for a count of 10.

If you are having difficulty belly breathing, refer to Chapter 15 ~ Chapter 9 (pg. 281) for help and more breathing exercises.

**HAVING TROUBLE?**

Having difficulty mastering Belly Breathing? Try breathing *in* through your mouth. Open it only a small amount, like you are "sipping" the breath through a straw.

**RELAXATION: DEEP ABDOMINAL BREATHING & VISUALIZATION**

- ▶ Lie down on the floor (rest your head on a pillow if desired).
- ▶ Bend your knees, with your feet approximately 8" apart.
- ▶ Turn your toes outward.
- ▶ Make sure your spine is straight and flat.
- ▶ Scan your body for tension.
- ▶ Place one hand on your abdomen, and one on your chest.
- ▶ Inhale - slowly, deeply, through your nose and into your abdomen.
- ▶ Feel the hand on your belly move.
- ▶ The hand on your chest should move very little.
- ▶ Repeat for 10 breaths.
- ▶ Re-scan your body for stress.
- ▶ When you are stress free, begin your visualization exercises.

You should incorporate abdominal breathing into all your breathing exercises.



## **STILL HAVING TROUBLE?**

If you experience continued difficulty learning how to breathe abdominally, or desire a method of measuring the volume of your respiration, the Sherwood Medical company in St. Louis, MO., manufactures an "Inspirometer" (Voldyne Volumetric Exerciser) for maintaining and improving volume and respiratory fitness.

## **THE RELAXING SIGH:**

- ▶ Sit or stand straight.
- ▶ Sigh deeply – let out a sound of deep relief.
  - > Let the air rush from your lungs.
  - > Don't think about inhaling – let air come in naturally
- ▶ Repeat 8 – 12 times utilizing abdominal breathing.

## **THE "MIST":**

Proper breathing allows you to relax and, in turn, increases your ability to visualize more effectively. In like manner, visualization can enhance your ability to breathe properly.

- ▶ Assume a comfortable position.
- ▶ Imagine the air you breathe as a cool white mist.
- ▶ *See* it come in through your nostrils.
- ▶ *See* it go down into your lungs
- ▶ *Feel* it cooling your throat and lungs
- ▶ Exhale slowly.
- ▶ The mist becomes invisible as you exhale.
- ▶ Repeat 10 times

The *MIST* may be combined with any other breathing technique to enhance its effectiveness. And, for variety, you can change the color of the *MIST* to match your mood.

## **REPOSE**

- ▶ Imagine you are a big cat out on the Serengeti Plain.
- ▶ You are a cheetah, the fastest animal on earth.

*Across the plain you see an antelope. The antelope is dinner. Now you know it is too far to get to that antelope. It is too far, so you have to wait until the antelope gets closer because you'll only get one shot at it. You may be the fastest animal on the plain but if you miss the antelope and you expend all of your energy, you may become the lion's dinner. You must conserve your energy.*

- ▶ So as you lay in the tall grass, you keep your eyes on the antelope.
- ▶ You are alert and aware.
- ▶ You are very mindful and awake but at the same time your body is loose and relaxed.
- ▶ Your mind is alert and vigilant, and your muscles are flaccid and slack – you are not wasting any energy.
- ▶ When the time comes, when the antelope gets near enough, you are absolutely ready to spring into action.
- ▶ You have all of your energy reserves available and now you have dinner.
- ▶ You are a winner.
- ▶ You are in *Repose*