

MENTAL HEALTH

ABDOMINAL BREATHING

Abdominal breathing, or deep breathing, is one of the best ways to reduce stress in our body. This is because when you breathe deeply, your body sends a message to your brain to relax. Then, your brain sends this message to the rest of your body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress. This strategy allows us to better react to our emotions and to events that we don't like or that make us uncomfortable.



You can watch the abdominal breathing video [here](#). It is recommended to do this exercise with friends or family.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.

2. Place one hand on your abdomen just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.



3. Take a deep breath in through your nose and let your abdomen push your hand forward. The chest area should not move.

4. Exhale through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel your hand go down on your abdomen and use it to help push out all the air gently.



5. Do this breathing exercise three to ten times. Take your time with each breath.

Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise. If this exercise worked well for you, add it to your list of resources to use when you are feeling stressed.



The abdominal breathing instructions are based on this resource from the [CIGNA organization](#).

If you are interested in learning more about different self-help coping strategies, visit our Unaccompanied Children Resource Center: ucresourcecenter.org.