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EXAMPLE OF A DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE

1. Lie down on your back. Bend your knees and move your feet about 8 in. apart with your knees turned slightly outward. This will help straighten your spine and keep you comfortable as you practice the breathing exercise. If you have back pain, you may want to place a pillow under your knees for extra support.
2. Mentally scan your body for extra tension
3. Place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest
4. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen, so that your hand rises as much as feels comfortable. Your chest should raise only a little and should begin to rise slightly after your abdomen begins to rise.
5. When you feel at ease with step 4 you can practice the deep breathing cycle. In the deep breathing cycle, inhale deeply and diaphragmatically through your nose while smiling slightly, then exhale through your mouth by gently blowing the air out of your lungs and making a whooshing sound like the wind. Making a whooshing sound will help relax the muscles of your mouth, tongue and jaw.
6. Take long slow deep breaths that raise and lower your abdomen. Focus on the sound and feeling of breathing as you become more and more relaxed.
7. Continue the deep breathing pattern for 3-5 minutes at a time, once or twice a day. Once you have done this daily for a week, you might extend your deep breathing exercise period to 5-10 minutes.
8. At the end of each deep breathing session, take time to once again scan your body for tension. Compare the tension you feel at the conclusion of the exercise with the tension you felt at the beginning of the exercise.
9. As you become more and more proficient at deep breathing (you quickly achieve the deep relaxation response through deep breathing). You can practice it any time during the day. In addition to your regularly scheduled sessions. Simply concentrate on your abdomen moving up and down and the air moving in and out of your lungs.
10. Once you have learned to use the deep breathing technique to elicit the relaxation response, you can practice it whenever you feel the need.

Remember, Main points of deep breathing: When exhaling, pull stomach in and exhale on a count of between 6-8 seconds with a 2-4 second hold at the bottom. When inhaling, allow stomach to inflate first on a count of 3-4 seconds with about a 1 second hold at the top. When you inhale first inflate stomach and then transfer air from stomach into lungs.