

## **Diaphragmatic Breathing**

The diaphragm is the most efficient muscle of breathing. It is a large, dome-shaped muscle located at top of the abdominal cavity. Your abdominal muscles help move the diaphragm and give you more power to empty your lungs. Practicing diaphragmatic breathing can help you quiet the nervous system and can aid in relaxation.

### **Diaphragmatic breathing technique**

**1.** Lie on your back on a flat surface or in bed, with your knees bent and your head supported. You can use a pillow under your knees to support your legs.



Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This will allow you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe.



**2.** Breathe in slowly through your nose so that your stomach moves out against your hand. Let the abdomen rise, as if a balloon was filling with air. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.

**3.** Exhale through the mouth slowly. The abdomen will lower as a balloon would deflate. The hand on your upper chest must remain as still as possible.



As you gain more practice, you can try the diaphragmatic breathing technique while sitting or standing and during normal activity.

### **How often should I practice this exercise?**

Practice this exercise 5-10 minutes about 1-2 times per day, once in the morning and once before going to bed. You can progress to performing it 3-4 times a day and as often as possible.