

# Breathing Exercise

By Dr. Pat Barry

**BREATHE OUT.** Right now. Breathe out all your breath as though you are blowing out a small candle, until there is no breath remaining.

Doing this simple act whenever you are aware of physical or mental tension can change your response to stress **MORE** than almost any other choice you can make! I promise that if you do this simple exercise for three weeks, it will change your physical and emotional reactions to stress: breathe out every time you're aware of tension, stress, anger, or fear. As you continue breathing out, you change your body's reactions to stress—**FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!**

It's a profoundly simple choice. Over a three-week period, release the tension in your body by breathing out immediately whenever you are stressed or tense. It will lower your blood pressure and improve your overall health, both physical and mental. It will also have a profound effect on your quality of life and relationships; instead of shutting down when you feel stress, you will react from a position of clarity and calmness.

Let's take the breath one step further.

When you breathe in your next breath, breathe it down into the cushion you are sitting on.

As you breathe in, push your abdomen out.

As you breathe out, pull your abdomen in.

Do this for three breaths. Notice how quiet you feel inside.

This abdominal breathing actually slows your body down—immediately! As you're breathing, allow your chest and shoulders to remain still. Let your abdomen do the breathing. Breathing with your chest and shoulders invites a stress response!

These directions are simple and to the point, and they really work.

By the way, in case you learned once upon a time to breathe in as a way to reduce stress, forget it. When you're stressed and you try to force a breath into an already tense body, you create an even higher physical tension in your body. **ALWAYS** begin by breathing out before taking in a breath.

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