



## SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

### DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING PRACTICE

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#### OBJECTIVES

Train diaphragmatic (controlled and deep) breathing in order to incorporate it as a strategy that can later be applied in public speaking practice.

#### TIME REQUIRED

Training throughout one week, for about 3 minutes a day.

#### NUMBER OF PEOPLE

Individual.

#### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A quiet space with the possibility of lying down in a comfortable bed or armchair, without external interruptions.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. It is important to bear in mind that breathing is an instinctive behaviour that is difficult to control in situations of anxiety if it is not practised beforehand at times that are favourable for learning, such as when we are calm at home.

A. Practice of CONTROLLED DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING:  
How is it applied?

1. **breathe in** through the nose for **3 seconds** → air to the bottom of the lungs (belly up, no shoulder movement);
2. **exhale** through the nose or mouth for **3 seconds**;
3. short pause of **1 second**.



A simple cycle can also be done:



In order to be able to do this practice at home, it is best to consider gradual training, starting by trying it out in simple situations and moving on to more complex ones that require greater dexterity. The final goal will be to apply it in real situations.

**Steps to follow** in the training, spending an average of 2 days on each step:

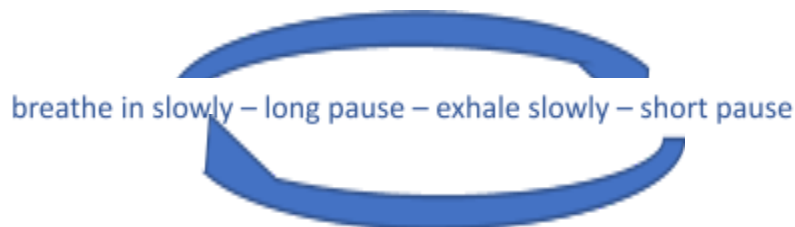
- *Training 1*: practice *lying down* or *sitting* with your head supported, in a quiet environment.
- *Training 2*: practice *standing upright* in a quiet situation (e.g. in the bedroom).
- *Training 3*: practise standing upright while doing some *undemanding activity* (e.g., listening to music or taking slow steps).
- *Training 4*: practice in situations that require *increasing activation* (e.g., having a conversation, in the midst of everyday events...).

#### B. DEEP, DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING practice

How is it applied?

1. **breathe in** through your nose *slowly* (and deeply) for **5 seconds**.
2. **hold** your breath (with the diaphragm) for **5 to 7 seconds**.
3. **exhale** *slowly* through your nose or mouth for **10 seconds** (mouth half open).
4. **Repeat this cycle 2 or 3 times**. It is important not to do this for much longer, as at rest you may hyperventilate.

A simple cycle can also be done:



In the same way as with controlled breathing, the training can be done progressively until it is applied in moments of high activation. While training, it is best not to exceed three cycles in a row so as not to force yourself and end up over-breathing. A good option is to alternate the practice of deep breathing with controlled breathing.

Once it is applied when we experience a high level of activation or anxiety, the time to change the rhythm and move to a more regular controlled breathing will be indicated by the body itself when a balance of the constants is restored.

**Steps** to follow in the training, practising each step over the course of a week:

- *Training 1*: practice sitting comfortably and with your head supported, in a quiet environment.
- *Training 2*: practice sitting upright in a quiet situation (e.g., in the bedroom).
- *Training 3*: practise sitting upright while doing an undemanding activity (e.g., listening to music or taking slow steps).
- *Training 4*: practice in situations that require increasing activation (e.g., having a conversation, in the middle of everyday events...). You can write down a list and progress according to the difficulty.

## **SELF-EVALUATION AND REFLECTION GUIDE**

The following questions can help you to assess your learning progress and subsequent application of the technique:

- Do I notice how the air I breathe reaches the lower part of my lungs (abdominal area), without overexerting myself?
- Can I naturally follow the set rhythm without having to stop to regulate it? Am I automating it?
- Do I feel that my physiological activation has decreased during the practice? Did I feel relaxed?
- Have I made a plan of everyday moments when I could practice the trained controlled breathing?
- Did I foresee stressful moments when I could practice trained deep-breathing?
- Have I had experiences where I have been able to manage stress or anxiety through the application of diaphragmatic breathing?
- Am I incorporating diaphragmatic breathing at different times in my life (both to prevent stress and to cope with anxious moments)?