

Mindful Breathing

"Belly Button Breathing" [aka Diaphragmatic Breathing]

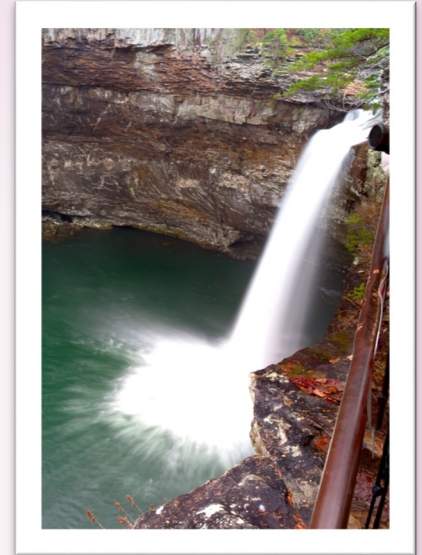
When doing this breathing exercise, you will breathe in and out slowly. A good rhythm to start with is a 4 count (between 4-6 seconds).

When you breathe in, breathe in slowly and imagine your breath going all the way into your belly until it touches your belly button before it can come back out.

When you breathe out, breathe all the air out slowly, imagining that so much air is exhaled that your belly button touches your backbone.

When ready, breathe in...1...2...3...4....breathe out....1...2...3...4.

You can begin to use some imagery as you do this exercise as well. One example I use sometimes is, when I breathe in, I imagine a waterfall accompanying my in breath. As I breathe in, the waterfall follows the path of the breath, starting to cover the "chaos" (as I refer to it for myself) that is in my mind. When I exhale, I imagine the waterfall hitting the bottom and splashing outwardly, taking those items with it. As it does, I try to relax my shoulders, jaw, and work down my body. Find one that works for you!



Controlled Breathing with an Object

You will be adjusting your breathing while interacting with the object. Some examples might be holding something in your hand and rubbing your thumb against it (think of those worry stones), rubbing your fingers/hand across a surface or texture (think rubbing your hand against your pants, or even petting an animal), or another repetitive moment (karate kid wax on/wax off). Most of these movements are completed with two gestures and therefore are perfect as they can be divided into breathe-in/breathe-out.

Match the gesture to your breathing – this is important because you want to validate where you are at the moment. If you are anxious and breathing fast, then your gesture would be faster.

Honor where you are emotionally and that it is ok to be in that place!!

Focusing on your breath and the gesture, slowly start changing the pace of your breath by changing the pace of your gesture. Do this at a pace that is comfortable for where you are. Using our anxiety example, do not think you have to go from this fast to slow pace immediately. **Again, honor where you are and take the healing pace that you need to take.** Some people might be able to from 100 to 65 in a few seconds, others might need a few minutes, others might need an hour. No one is incorrect, no is better or worse than the other.

The goal is to get to a healthy place on a safe journey.

