

## **Simple breathing relaxation exercise (Dr Alastair Dobbin)**

Firstly, I'd like you to sit comfortably in the chair with your feet resting on the ground.

Count in your mind, letting each count last about a second.

To relax deeply you need to breathe deep down into your stomach, so during this exercise rest your hand on your belly button.

Take in a slow deep breath to push your hand out with your stomach and then breathe out slowly allowing your shoulders, face and body to relax. Do this to a count of four.

Breathe like this for 5 more breaths, focusing on your hand and stomach as they rise and fall, relaxing more with each breath.

As you continue doing this a special muscle in your stomach called the diaphragm will begin to send messages to your brain that you are safe and can relax.

Next, I'd like you to say the word calm out loud. Now say it more quietly. Now say it inside your head quietly, gently repeating it over and over like it was the sound of a bell ...calm, calm, calm.

Now take in a normal breath and hold your breath to a count of five - one, two, three, four, five. And now breathe out slowly relaxing your shoulders, face and body.

1. Now - Breathe in slowly, pushing your hand out with your stomach,
2. Breathe out slowly, allowing your hand and stomach to rest back down to a count of 4.
3. Continue breathing like this for 5 more breaths, focusing on your hand and stomach as they rise and fall, relaxing more with each breath

As you breathe in notice the stretching sensation and as you breathe out notice the relaxation that follows.

Every time you breathe out you will feel more calm and more relaxed

You need only do this for a couple of minutes for it to start relaxing your mind.

Once you have the hang of the stomach movement you won't need to rest your hand on your stomach although if you are lying down it's a pleasant thing to do. Practice this exercise regularly and each time the relaxation will become a little deeper and it will become automatic so you can use it easily any time you feel anxious. It's great to do it in bed at night to help you sleep.