



# Breathing Techniques to Refocus & Get into your Performance Mindset

## Too charged up, having worries or negative feelings just breathe!

We all know how to breathe, we do it every day without knowing it, and it doesn't even take practice. However, if controlled properly, we can use breathing as a form of relaxation during stressful situations.

### Controlled Breathing:

Breathing is one of the easiest physiological systems to control. If done correctly, breathing can have a calming effect on the body by delivering the appropriate amounts of oxygen to the body as well as working to remove waste products associated with physical activity.

### Breathing from the Diaphragm:

Diaphragmatic (Belly) breathing is a key component to using the breath as a relaxation tool. To learn diaphragmatic breathing follow these steps. 1. Lay down on your back. Place one hand by your side and the other on your stomach, on top or just below the belly button. 2. As you breath concentrate on using your diaphragm to fill your lungs. You will know when you have done this by the way your stomach expands each time you take a breath. The hand you placed on your stomach should rise and fall each time you take a breath. Try not to raise your shoulders as you breathe in.

### Rhythmic Breathing:

Rhythmic breathing involves breathing to a measured count. For instance, you might inhale for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of four and exhale for a count of four (i.e. count it as IN-2-3-4, HOLD-2-3-4, OUT-2-3-4). While doing rhythmic breathing become aware of each breath you take. Try to fill your lungs completely when inhaling, as well as, completely exhaling by squeezing your muscles to eliminate all the air. Also pay attention to the period of time when you are holding your breath. Become aware of the tension felt in the muscles as well as the release of this tension when you are exhaling.

### Ratio Breathing:

Ratio Breathing consists of using a specific ratio for breathing. For instance a 2:1 pattern. When using this ratio you might breathe in for a count of four and exhale for a count of eight (i.e. IN-2-3-4, OUT-2-3-4-5-6-7-8). At first you may have to concentrate heavily on the breathing



pattern, however, as you become better at controlling your breathing these actions become automatic. Learning to control your breathing over time will help to improve overall balance, power and coordination, which eventually should lead to a greater tolerance for the physical pain associated with training.