

## Strategy #9: Deep Breathing: Extended Exhale

**To ensure you are taking deep breaths and not shallow breaths, try the following exercise.**

- Sitting in a chair, standing, or lying on your back, place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach.
- Take a minute to breathe as you normally do.
- Check whether your chest is rising or your belly is rising.
- If your chest is rising and your belly is not moving, you are shallow breathing.
- If your belly is rising, you are taking full, deep breaths and will trigger relaxation in your body.
- Focus your attention on your breath until you are taking deep breaths and your stomach is rising.
- If you are sitting in a chair or lying down, you may feel your lower back press against the surface when you do deep breathing.
- You may have to play around and push your stomach out if this type of breathing is new to you. Aim for smooth, deep breaths.
- Practice until you can tell the difference between a deep breath and a shallow breath and you know how to shift into deep breathing as soon as you notice your warning signs.

### Extended exhale

The purpose of the extended exhale is to trigger the relaxation response. The longer you exhale, the quicker you relax your body. Try one of the following counting sequences as you breathe.

- Inhale through your nose for a count of three and then exhale through your mouth for a count of six (3–6 breathing).
- Inhale through your nose for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of two, and then exhale for a count of six (4–2–6 breathing).

Practice this five times per day for two minutes when you are not stressed, and practice as soon as you notice your stress warning signs.



#### AUDIO FILE

*Audio file #2: Deep Breathing: Extended Exhale ([www.brushededucation.ca/stress](http://www.brushededucation.ca/stress))*