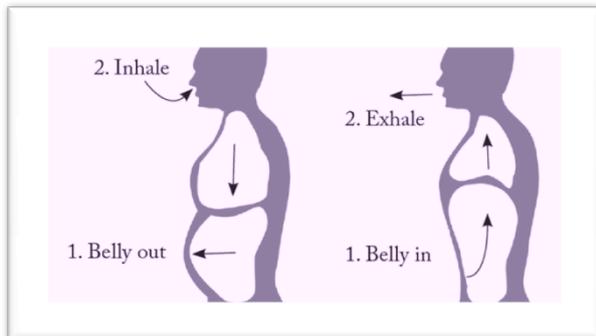


## Using breathing to move from anxiety to calm



### 1 Belly Breathing

Sit on a chair, in an upright but comfortable position. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and draw it all the way down to your belly. Imagine that there is a balloon in your belly that you are blowing up with the breath. As you breathe in, imagine the balloon expanding and notice that your belly expands. Hold the breath for one or two seconds, then breathe out very slowly through your mouth, over a count of 6–7 seconds (as though you're gently blowing on a spoonful of soup to cool it down).

If you're having trouble getting the breath to go beyond the chest, reach behind your chair and clasp your hands together. Relax your abdominal muscles (so your belly can expand), and breathe in through the nose, letting the breath swim right down to the belly. If you're still having trouble, try clapping your hands behind your neck to open up the chest area and make deep breathing easier.

#### The main things to remember are these:

- 1 Breathe in through the nose (over a count of 3–4 seconds)
- 2 Draw the breath right down to the belly, so it expands
- 3 Hold the breath for 1–2 seconds
- 4 Breathe out through the mouth very slowly (over a count of 6–7 seconds).

*Repeat five times or more, until you notice that your body has relaxed and your mind has stopped racing. Let the good feeling soak in for a minute or so, if you can, and notice how this feels.*

### 2 Ujjay Breathing

This type of breathing involves making a sound rather like Darth Vader as you breathe. Sit upright but comfortably, as above. Take a slow, deep breath, and as you breathe out, say "Haaaaa" aloud, as though you're breathing onto a mirror.

To perform Ujjay breathing, you're going to try to make that sound with your mouth closed.



Start by pursing your mouth, as though kissing someone or drinking through a straw (this helps to activate the vagus nerve). Now breathe in noisily through the nose (making that 'haaaa' sound with your mouth closed), drawing the air down through the back of the throat, and keeping your mouth pursed. Then noisily breathe out through the nose, making that 'haaaa' sound with the back of your throat, lips still pursed. Repeat several times, until you feel the anxiety lessen.