

Inova TobaccoNET

The Relaxing Sigh and Breath

During the day, you probably catch yourself sighing or yawning. This generally is a sign that you are not getting enough oxygen. Sighing and yawning are your body's way of remedying the situation. A sigh is often accompanied by a feeling of tension. A sigh releases some tension and can be practiced at will as a means of relaxing.

The Relaxing Sigh

- * Sit or stand up straight.
- * Sigh deeply, letting out a sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs.
- * Don't think about inhaling; just let the air come in naturally.
- * Repeat this procedure eight to 12 times or whenever you feel the need for it, and experience the feeling of relaxation.

The Relaxing Breath

Proper breathing is an antidote for stress. The benefits derived from practicing breathing exercises include a reduction in anxiety, depression, irritability, muscular tension and fatigue. These benefits will be fully appreciated with time and persistence.

- * Although this exercise can be practiced in a variety of poses, the following is recommended: lie down on a blanket or rug on the floor. Bend your knees and move your feet about eight inches apart, with your toes turned outward slightly. Make sure your spine is straight.
- * Scan your body for tension.
- * Place one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest.
- * Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen to push up your hand as much as feels comfortable. Your chest should move only a little and only with your abdomen.
- * When you feel at ease with step four, smile slightly, inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, making a quiet relaxing whooshing sound as you blow gently out. Your mouth, tongue and jaw will be relaxed. Take long slow deep breaths which raise and lower your abdomen. Focus on the sound and feeling of breathing as you become more and more relaxed.
- * Continue deep breathing for about five or ten minutes at a time, once or twice a day, for a couple of weeks. Then if you like, extend this period to 20 minutes.
- * At the end of each deep breathing session, take a little time to once more scan your body for tension. Compare the tension you feel at the conclusion of the exercise with that which you experienced when you began.
- * When you become at ease with breathing into your abdomen, practice it whenever you feel yourself getting tense.