



Breathing Exercises

Breathing is an important technique for emotional regulation as it assists in down-shifting the body's responses to stress.

Although breathing is an automatic process, that's normally regulated by your brain stem (an area of your brain that maintains basic bodily functions such as breathing and heart rate) it can be influenced by other parts of your brain, such as the limbic system (the feelings part of your brain) in response to stress.

When you do a breathing exercise, you're actually using the more advanced parts of your brain (your frontal cortex) to think about breathing and consciously make changes to your breathing, which can slow your body back down again, and help you to contain or think through emotional responses. We make use of breathing as it is one of the cornerstones within self-regulation programs, for this exact reason.

Breathing is an important skill for kids and adults because it can help to:

- Regulate your emotions,
- Develop a sense of calm,
- Reduce anxiety,
- Reduce the intensity or duration of upset feelings,
- Help to think through reactions to situations, and
- Gain some perspective of the situation.

Breathing is a skill that needs practice, as it can be difficult to do "in the moment" when feeling dysregulated within developing some of the basic skills.

When starting breathing exercises, it is a good idea to ensure that you are not upset or angry and that you have a quiet space where you can sit down and concentrate. Once you have started to master the skill you will find that it will be easier to practice anywhere in any situation.