

Stress and Deep Breathing

Many college students feel stressed at one time or another in their lives. A simple method that may help ease stress is deep breathing. Most people breathe very shallowly, using only the upper part of their lungs. Deep breathing (also known as diaphragmatic breathing) utilizes all parts of the lungs, and can increase the absorption of oxygen and help relax the body and mind.

Breathing Awareness

To become more aware of your breathing, try this simple exercise. Sit comfortably in a chair. Relax, but maintain good posture. Close your eyes. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your abdomen, and notice which hand seems to move more than the other. If it is the hand on your chest, then you are only using the upper part of your lungs and you are not breathing correctly.

Deep Breathing

Focus on breathing deeply, so that you feel your abdomen rise and fall with each breath. Place your hands at your sides or in your lap. Inhale slowly, first filling the lower part of your lungs, then the middle part, then the upper part. Hold your breath for a second or two, then exhale slowly and completely, feeling your abdomen move inwards as you exhale as much air as possible from your lungs. Concentrate on slow, deep, rhythmic breathing. Notice the sound and rhythm of your breathing. Focus on the feel and temperature of your breath as it enters and leaves your body. Practice this for a few minutes each day. You may wish to gradually increase the time you spend doing deep breathing to ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes.

Uses for Deep Breathing

You can use deep breathing when you feel stressed and need to relax. Deep breathing can be a mini vacation during your day, or can be used to reduce tension and anxiety just before an exam. You may wish to combine deep breathing with meditation, prayer, or imagery. The process of deep breathing may feel strange at first, but will become more natural with practice.

For Further Help

If you are feeling very stressed, you may wish to make an appointment to see a counselor. You can stop by our office in Frese Hall on the first floor, or call our office at 718-997-5420.

Prepared by
COUNSELING SERVICES
FRESE HALL, FIRST FLOOR
718-997-5420

Hours: Monday, Thursday, Friday, 9am to 5pm
Tuesday, Wednesday, 9am to 7pm
Saturday 10am to 3pm This office is not open in the evening or on
Saturday during winter and summer sessions.
The office is closed on Fridays during the summer.