

# Take a Deep Breath and...



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Relax. Can you do it? Right now, at this moment? Maybe you are even experiencing some stress trying to find a way to relax. You're not alone. Most people do not know how to even start to go about it, because we're not even sure what true relaxation is. We are so busy going from appointment to appointment, that even when we do have a moment to ourselves, our first thought is that, "there must be something I have to do".

We need to incorporate relaxation into our day, every day. While candles, incense, and oils are nice, it is possible, and essential to learn to lower our stress levels without props. After all, pulling out a candle and asking someone to wait while you meditate for a moment may not be the best idea when you are in a business setting.

Meditation and visualization are very effective techniques, which allow for the best possible outcome of a situation, before an event, meeting, or presentation. We want to be ready, both mentally and physically, which translates to poise, energy and confidence. When we present ourselves that way, people feel more comfortable, and want to do business with us. Would you want to do business with someone who came across as unsure? Of course not!

Meditation and visualization are best learned from someone with experience, who will empower you to do those techniques on your own. Relaxation stems from breathing. We were born breathing correctly, but over time our breathing changed, becoming less efficient, actually leading to stress inducing habits. Let's take a breath right now. Inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Pay attention to where the breath is. Chances are, your

chest is rising and falling, and your shoulders are raised up towards your ears. When our shoulders raise, it causes tension in the shoulder and neck area. Oftentimes, when I see clients complaining of neck and shoulder pain, they have no idea that their shoulders are raised at all, as raised shoulders have become "natural" for them. Raised shoulders plus cradling the phone, working on the computer, writing, etc. – a recipe for stress, neck pain and poor posture.

If you watch a baby breathe, their abdomen rises and falls slowly. So let's re-learn that process. Place one hand on your abdomen, and one on your chest. Inhale through your nose, and exhale slowly through your mouth, focusing on making the hand on your abdominals rise on the inhale, and lower on the exhale.

Breathing this way allows for more efficient oxygen intake, it's relaxing for our body, and as a bonus, it tightens the abdominal muscles. Energy, confidence AND poise, all from being mindful of our breath. Cool, huh? This is best practiced while lying down, as it is easiest to access the abdominals, but once mastered, can be done anywhere - in a chair, stuck in traffic, waiting on line, etc. In a very short time, your body will respond to this exercise, and it will become natural to breathe that way. This breath is the foundation for other breathing techniques I teach my clients, such as the counting breath, or the breath of empowerment, that can be called on at a moment's notice during a stressful situation. Truly being able to relax will empower and energize you, a big benefit for both you and your business.

*Tami Racaniello, President and founder of It's Time to Get Fit, [www.itstimetogefit.com](http://www.itstimetogefit.com), specializes in mind/body techniques such as yoga, Pilates, guided meditations and visualizations, and energy balance work.*