

# Belly Breathing

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Sometimes when you feel mad or sad, you don't know how to feel better. That feeling is called stress. Stress can make your body feel tight, too. Your body feels like your muscles are squeezing together. Feeling stress a lot of the time is not good for your body.

Why is it good to know what stress feels like? Because if you know how stress feels, then you can make it go away. When stress goes away, your body feels better and you feel happy.

How do you make stress go away? Here is 1 thing you can do when you feel stress. You can try belly breathing. Belly breathing is when you take deep breaths. You breathe so deep that you feel it in your belly.

Belly breathing can help you relax. Belly breathing can make your body stop feeling squeezed. Belly breathing can help you feel better. Try it!

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## How to Do Belly Breathing

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Try belly breathing the next time you feel sad or mad. Deep breaths like this can help make stress go away.

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- 1) Lie on your back. Close your eyes. Put your hands on your belly.
  - 2) Keep your mouth closed. Breathe slowly through your nose. Count to 8 in your head while you breathe in.
  - 3) Hold that air in your body while you count to 2 in your head.
  - 4) Slowly let the air out through your mouth or nose.
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Try it now. Breathe in through your nose. Hold the air in your body. Slowly let the air out.

What did you feel your belly do? Your belly should go up and down when you take deep breaths. That is why it is called belly breathing!

Taking deep breaths can help make stress go away. Taking deep breaths may help you feel happy. Taking deep breaths is good for your body, too.

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## For Parents

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This activity is appropriate for kids ages 3 to 7.

When doing this deep-breathing exercise, make sure your child feels comfortable. Have him lie down on a bed or the couch. Count softly for him while he slowly inhales, holds, and exhales. Remind him to feel his belly moving. Have him keep taking deep breaths until his body relaxes.

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