

Take a Deep Breath and Relax

While breathing is something we do automatically, it is also something we can control through slowing it down and intentionally breathing deeper. Both of these actions are a way to lower our stress levels, almost immediately, through increasing oxygen to the body, decreasing heart rate and lowering blood pressure.

1. Sit comfortably, in a quiet place.
2. Put one hand on your chest and one on your belly.
3. Make a conscious effort to use your diaphragm when you breathe in, pushing your belly out, as best you can.
4. Sit quietly with your eyes closed or lowered, paying attention to your breath.
5. Keep practicing, noticing when your mind wanders, and bring it back to the breath each time.
6. Count breaths to 10 and back again. Do this for a few minutes.
7. Now try to deepen your breath by counting to four on the inhalation and four on the exhalation. Practice this for a few minutes, paying attention to your breath.
8. Now wiggle your fingers, toes, open your eyes, have a nice stretch, try on a smile.
9. Move on with your day with the knowledge that you just did something nice for yourself!

(adapted from Rogers & Maytan, 2012)

If you would like to have a confidential, supportive conversation, feel free to schedule an appointment with a personal counselor at the Health & Counseling Centre by calling 905-828-5255. You may also call Good2Talk at 1-866-925-5454 for professional counselling, mental health information and connections to local resources.