

Centering

This skill can be done standing or sitting. If sitting, make sure that you are upright so that your diaphragm is open and free to receive the air.

Focus your attention on the path of your breath. As you do so, inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, allowing the air to travel right down into your diaphragm (located right under the centre of your rib cage, just above your stomach).

As your diaphragm fills with air, you will feel this part of your body rise and then fall as you breathe out. When first learning this skill it is helpful to sit in a chair, tip your pelvis forward into a bit of a slouch, and place your hand on your diaphragm so that you can feel and see the rise and fall of your body. This gives you a feedback check on whether you are breathing all the way down into your diaphragm.

Pause for a second, once you have taken in a complete breath. Then slowly let the air out through your mouth. Allow the air to take twice as long to leave your body as it took to breathe it in.

As the breath leaves your body, check your jaw for tension and loosen it, allowing your shoulders to drop and relax. If you are standing let your knees soften, making sure they aren't locked. If you are sitting, relax into your buttocks and let yourself sink into the chair.

Repeat this process in a focused way for as many times as you need to. Even two to three deep breaths will relax your entire mind/body system.

In Summary

1. Breathe in through your nose.
2. Focus 100% of your attention on your diaphragm as it fills with air.
3. Pause.
4. Slowly let the breath out through your mouth.
5. As you breathe out, shift your attention to your jaw which loosens, shoulders which drop and knees which soften or buttocks that sink.
6. Repeat as needed.