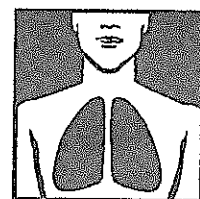


FULL BREATHING



John D., a sixty-eight-year-old retired machinist, had been a resident of Los Angeles for over forty years. When John first came to see us, he suffered from shortness of breath, could not go outdoors on smoggy days, and was unable to engage in any sort of active exercise. After using Relaxercise exercises for four weeks, John's breathing capacity had increased by nearly 50 percent, and he was able to walk up to a mile a day, comfortably.

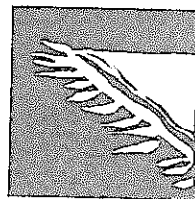
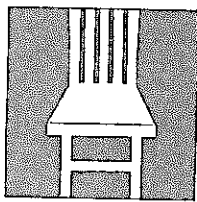
Living is not possible without breathing. We breathe every moment of our lives, inhaling and exhaling over twenty thousand times each day. But we hardly ever stop to think about our breathing. Our breathing is regulated by our brain and adjusts automatically to every change in our activity and emotion. Whether we are fearful or confident, relaxed or excited, joyous or angry, our breathing alters accordingly, becoming either quicker or slower, deeper or more shallow.

We live in a fast-paced modern world in which tension and stress are hard to avoid. One of our first responses to stress is to hold our breath and tighten our chest. Constricted breathing can easily become a habit. In fact, your breathing can become so restricted that before you know it, you are using only 50 percent of your natural lung capacity. Over time, habits of restricted breathing can drain your vitality and have an adverse effect on your health, posture, and flexibility.

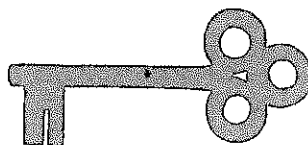
There are two basic human breathing patterns. In one, the abdomen expands as you inhale; this is called "diaphragmatic breathing." In the other, the abdomen is drawn in, and the chest expands while inhaling. This is called "paradoxical breathing." These are both natural and normal ways to breathe and vary according to your activity.

"Full Breathing" will show you how to quickly increase your lung capacity and achieve relaxed, stress-free breathing.

FULL BREATHING



You will need a hard, or firmly cushioned chair or seat. For movements 1–6, you can also use an exercise mat or rug.



Use the Relaxercise Keys

- Go slowly.
- Make each movement small and easy.
- Relax as much as you can.
- Rest briefly after each movement.

Note: This entire exercise can be done either seated in a chair, or, you can do movements 1 through 6 while lying on your back. **Movements 7 through 13 must be done while seated in a chair.**

STARTING POSITIONS

Seated Sit on the forward part of your chair or seat. Rest your hands on your thighs. Your feet should rest flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, directly below your knees.

Lying down Lie on your back on a cushioned mat or rug and rest your arms comfortably by your sides. Bend your knees and rest your feet on the floor, shoulder width apart, directly below your knees.

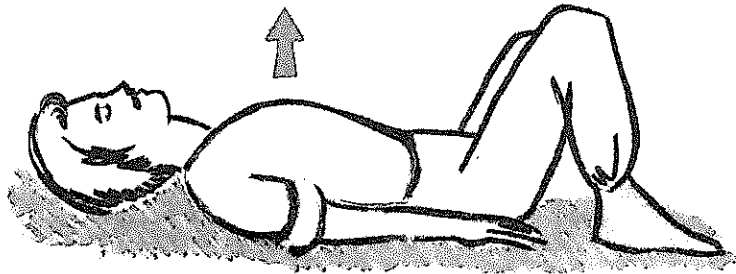
repeat each movement 4 to 8 times

1

When you inhale (breathe in), slowly draw in your lower abdomen. Then exhale (breathe out) normally.

Your lower abdomen is the area between your belly button and your pubic bone.

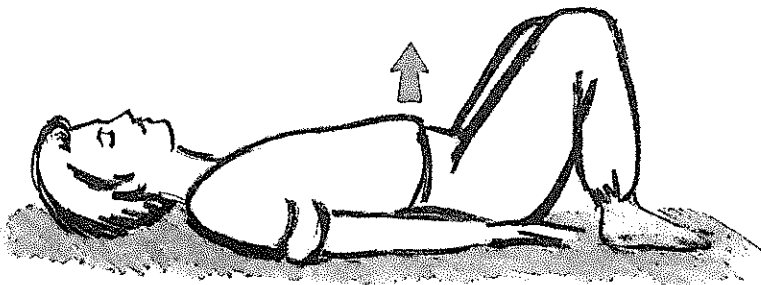
- Don't breathe more deeply than usual.
- Feel your chest expanding as you inhale.
- Follow the movement of air as it passes through your nose and fills your chest.
- Relax your face, jaw, neck, shoulders, and legs.



2

Inhale normally, but while exhaling, slowly push the air down so your lower abdomen expands, becoming rounder and larger.

- Rest your hands on your lower abdomen and feel it expanding.
- Notice that when you exhale, your chest gets smaller and flatter.
- When you exhale and expand your lower abdomen, does one side of your abdomen expand more than the other?



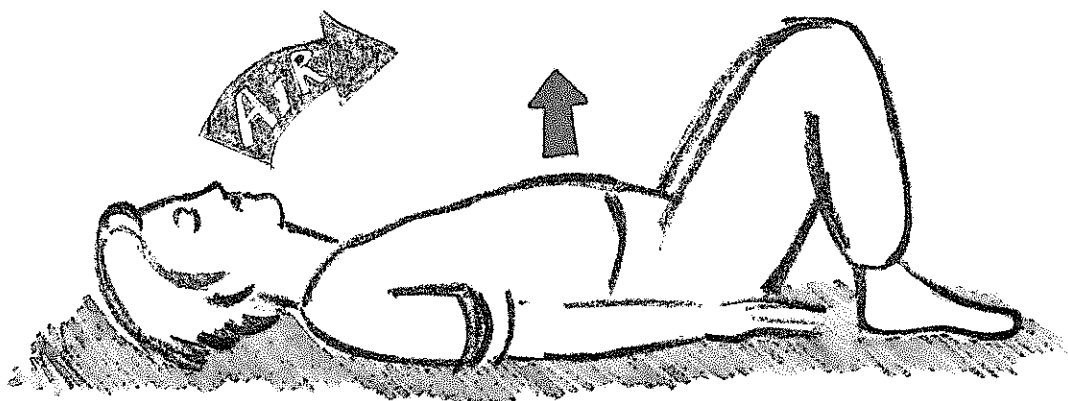
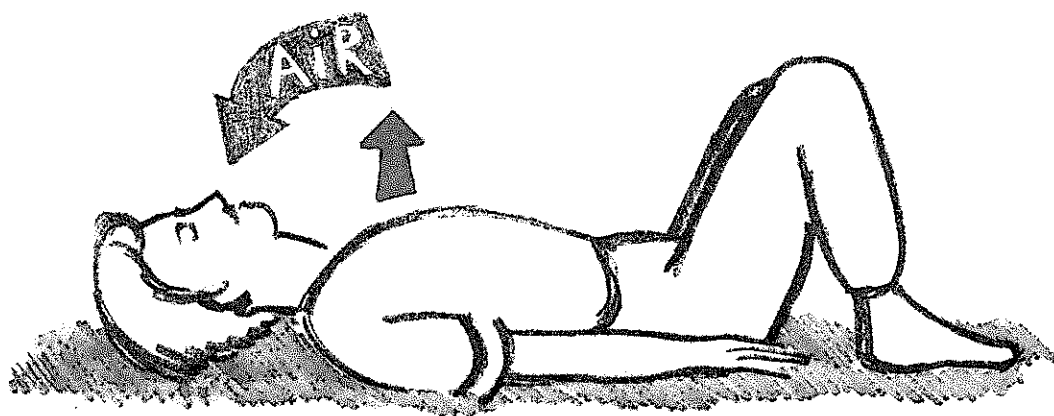
rest and breathe normally between each movement

alternate slowly

3

While inhaling, slowly draw in your lower abdomen and expand your chest. While exhaling, slowly expand your lower abdomen and let your chest flatten.

- Make each movement as smooth as possible.
- Go slowly so you can relax your shoulders, stomach, and legs.
- As you breathe in and out, feel the see-saw movement of your chest and abdomen.
- Notice how your chest expands in all directions: forward, backward, left, and right.



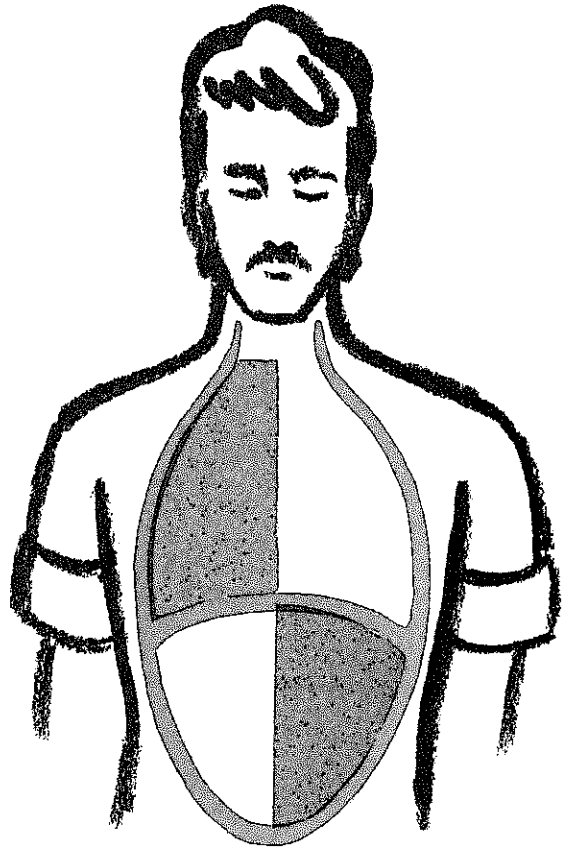
go slowly . . .

use as little muscular effort as possible

4

While inhaling, slowly draw in your lower abdomen and try to breathe into the right side of your chest. While exhaling, push the air down and into the left side of your lower abdomen.

- Note: this is a diagonal, see-saw movement.
- As you inhale, pay attention to the right side of your chest.
- As you exhale, pay attention to the left side of your lower abdomen.
- Put your hands on your lower abdomen so you can feel the left side expanding more than the right.



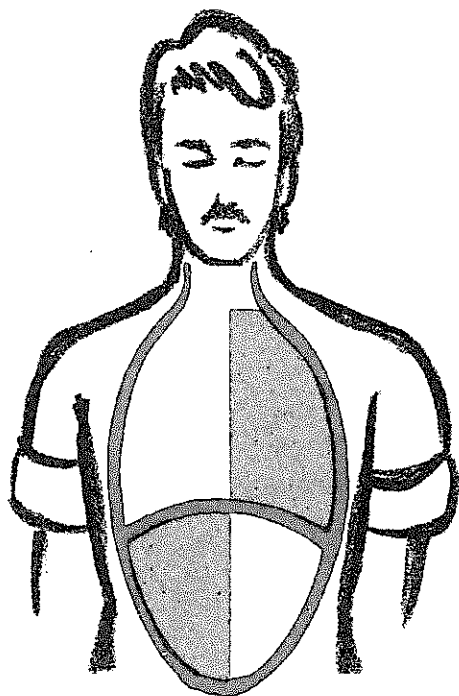
And now, rest.

- Feel the difference between the right and left sides of your chest.
- Feel the difference between the right and left sides of your lower abdomen.

pause to rest after each movement

make each movement slow and easy

5



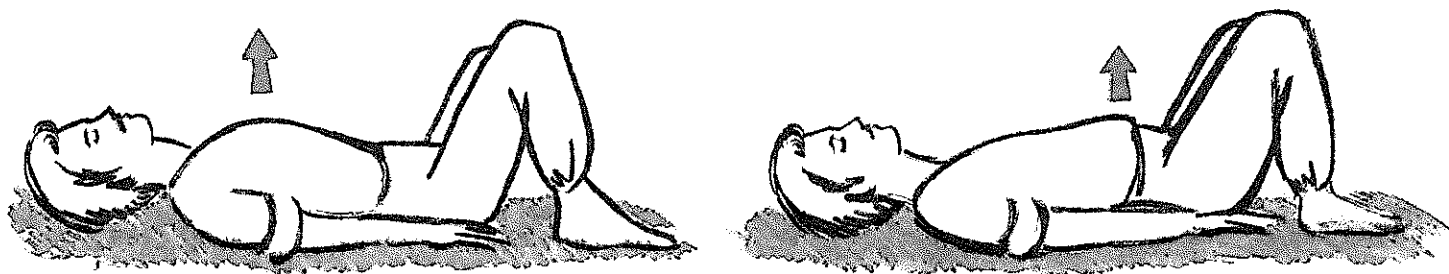
While inhaling, slowly draw in your lower abdomen and breathe into the left side of your chest. While exhaling, push the air down and into the right side of your lower abdomen.

- Feel the slight diagonal movement from your left shoulder to your right hip.
- Relax your entire body as much as possible.
- Rest your hands on your lower abdomen and feel it expanding.
- As you inhale, pay attention to the left side of your chest.
- As you exhale, pay attention to the right side of your lower abdomen.

6

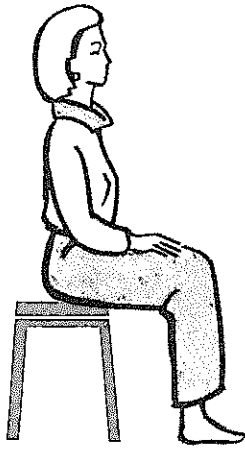
While inhaling, slowly draw in your entire lower abdomen and let your chest expand. While exhaling, slowly expand your entire lower abdomen and let your chest flatten.

- Notice that your chest and abdomen are expanding more easily.
- Notice how as you exhale, your head lowers slightly, and as you inhale, your head rises slightly.



relax your entire body

repeat each movement 4 to 8 times

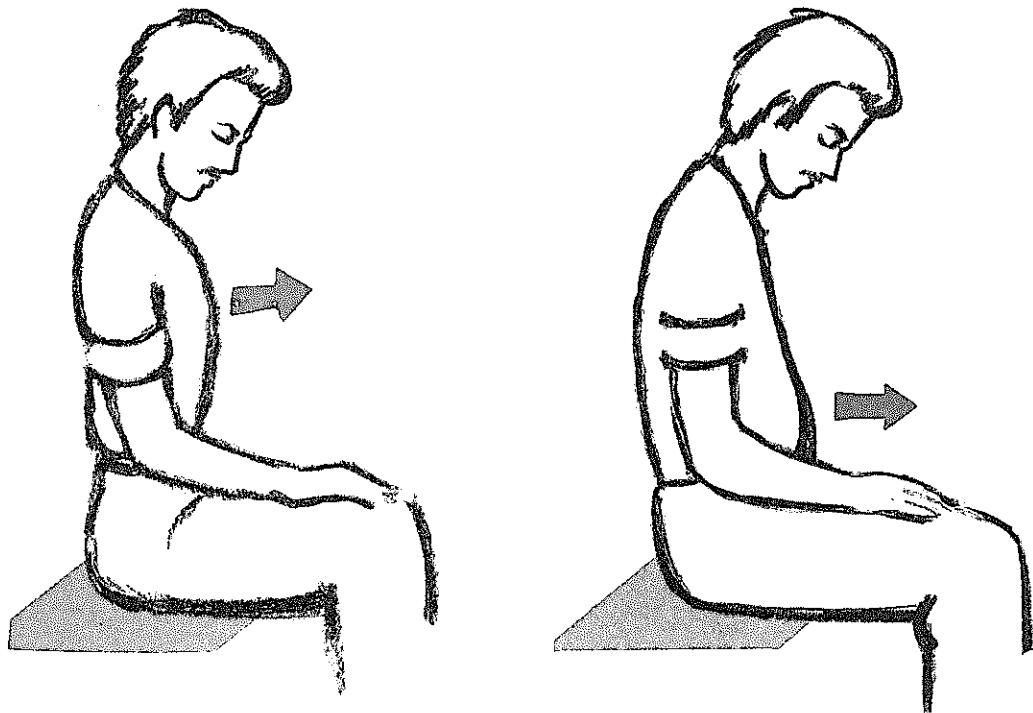


NOTE: The concluding series of movements must be done while seated. Sit on the forward part of a hard or firmly cushioned chair. Rest your hands on your thighs and rest your feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, directly below your knees.

7

Let your head hang down so your chin rests close to your chest. Then, while inhaling, slowly draw your lower abdomen in and expand your chest. While exhaling, slowly expand your lower abdomen and let your chest flatten.

- Notice that when you exhale, your entire body sinks down a little, and when you inhale, your entire body rises a little.



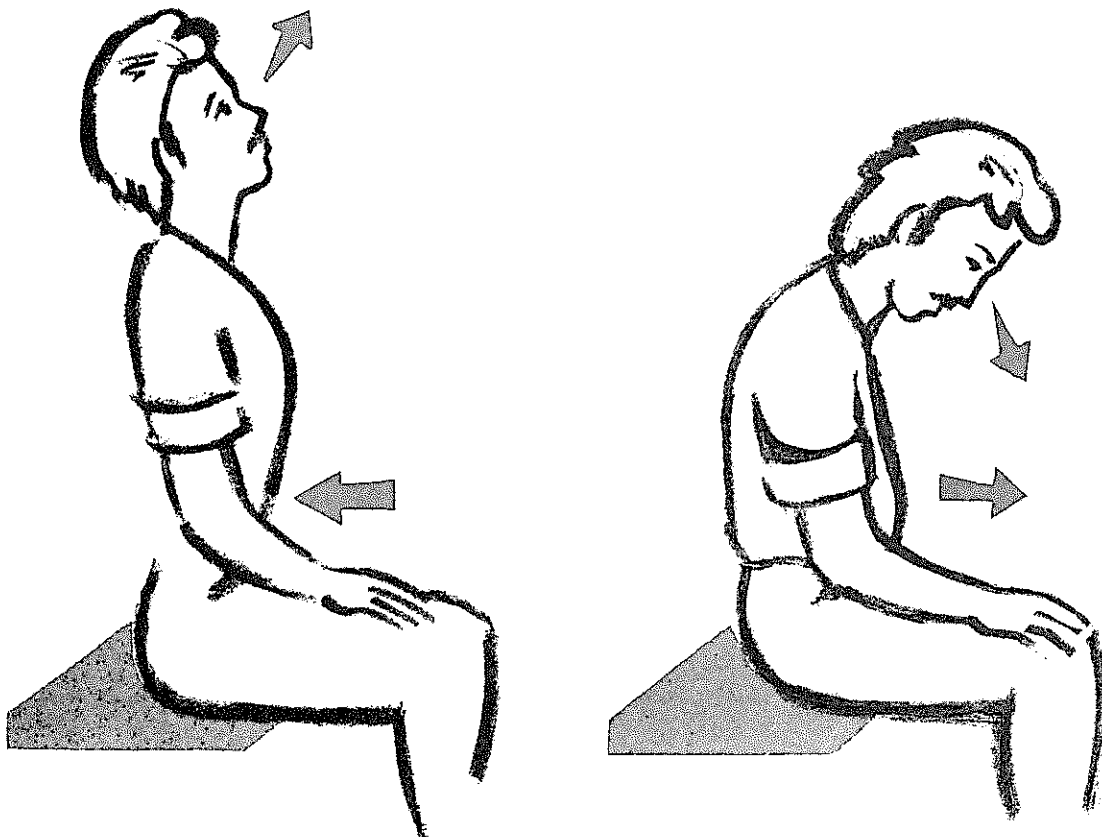
relax your neck and shoulders

breathe normally between each movement

8

While inhaling, slowly draw in your lower abdomen and lift your head to look up. While exhaling, slowly expand your lower abdomen and lower your head to look down.

- Your chest rises and lowers as your head moves up and down.
- Feel your spine moving. When you inhale, your back arches, and when you exhale, your back rounds.

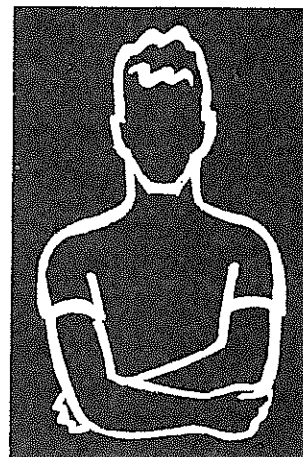


don't stretch or strain

make each movement easier and more comfortable

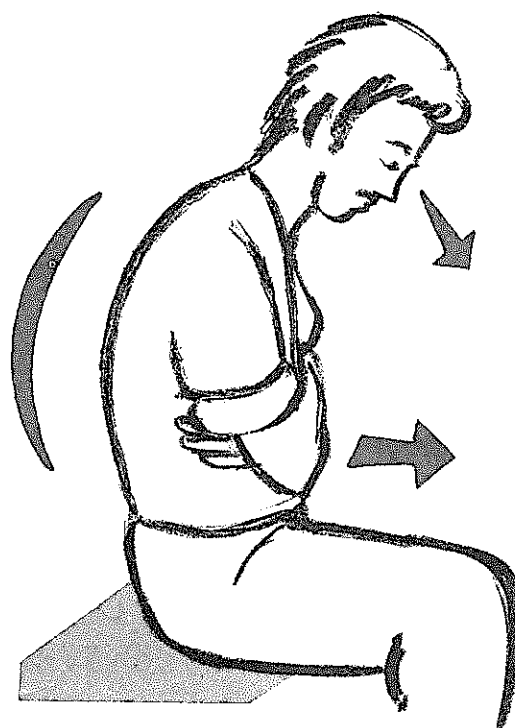
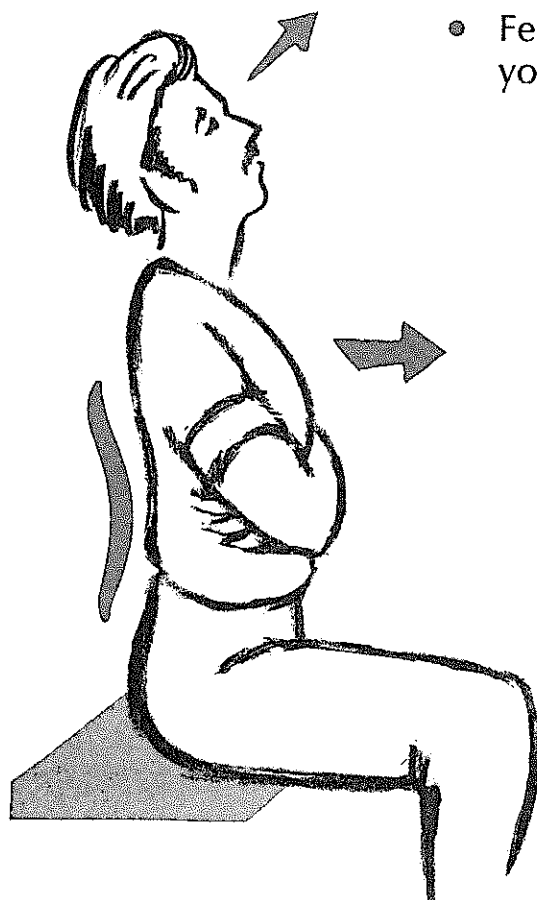
9

For the next movement, embrace yourself gently. Cross your left arm over your chest and put your left hand over or near the lower ribs on your right side. Cross your right arm over your left arm and put your right hand under your left elbow near the lower ribs on your left side. Don't stretch!



While inhaling, simultaneously draw in your lower abdomen, expand your chest, lift your head to look up, and arch your back. While exhaling, simultaneously expand your lower abdomen, let your chest flatten, lower your head to look down, and round your back.

- Relax your face, shoulders, chest, stomach, and legs.
- Notice how embracing yourself limits the movement of your chest.
- Feel the slight rocking movement of your lower back and pelvis.



go slowly . . .

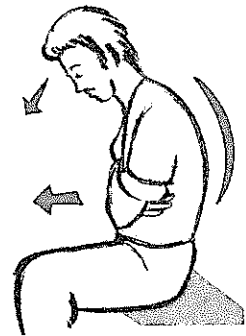
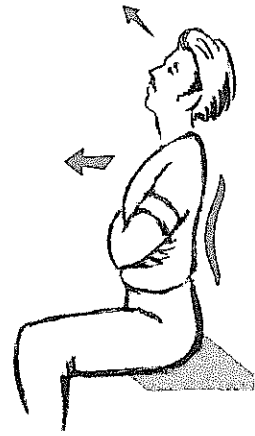
relax your entire body

10

Reverse the position of your arms: Embrace yourself, with your left arm crossing over your right arm.

While inhaling, simultaneously draw in your lower abdomen, expand your chest, lift your head to look up, and arch your back. While exhaling, simultaneously expand your lower abdomen, let your chest flatten, lower your head to look down, and round your back.

- Feel your chest rising and lowering with the movement of your head.
- The more you arch your back, the more your chest rises.



And now, rest.

- Feel your chest expanding in all directions more easily!
- Your sitting posture has improved and is more upright!
- Notice how relaxed your breathing is!

11

While inhaling, slowly draw in your lower abdomen and lift your head to look up. While exhaling, slowly expand your lower abdomen and lower your head to look down.

- Feel how your chest is expanding more easily!
- Feel how your back is arching and rounding more easily!
- Feel the improvement!

feel the difference!

let your body move freely

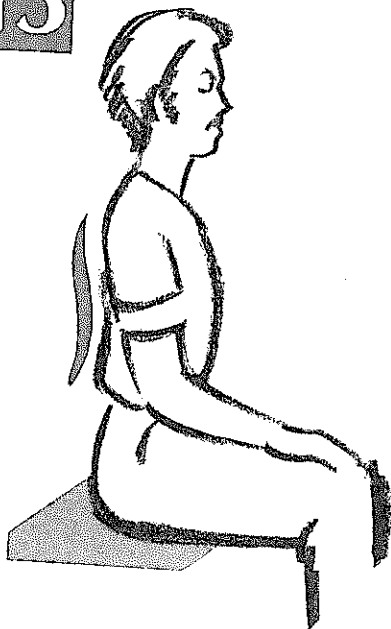
12



Sit back in your chair and let your back become rounded or "slumped."

- Notice that your chest becomes flattened and your breathing becomes restricted.
- Notice that the muscles of your neck and back are strained, and the flexibility of your neck is limited.

13



Now sit on the forward edge of your chair, with your lower back slightly arched and your weight supported by your pelvic sitting bones.

- Notice that your neck and shoulders are relaxed and free to move, and your stomach muscles are relaxed.
- Notice that your chest is expanding easily.
- Feel the difference in your breathing!

You have completed "**Full Breathing.**" When you stand up and walk around, feel how relaxed your entire body is and feel the improvement in your posture!

Enjoy your improvement!