

## ACTIVITY 3

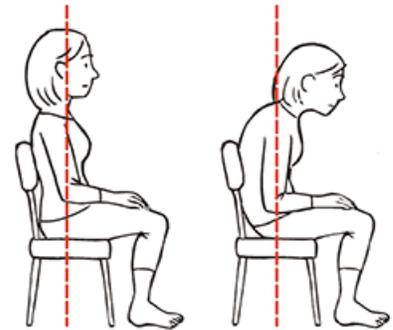
# Take a Breath Break

*Read steps 1-5 before beginning.*

### Instructions:

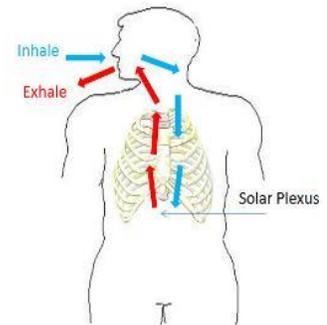
1. Take Blood Pressure and write result on your Participant Results Form.

2. Stay seated in a comfortable upright, but relaxed position. You should be sitting tall with your ears, shoulders and hips lined up; head and neck in a neutral position or chin tipped slightly downward, and your shoulders relaxed (as shown on the image on the left). Do not slouch forward (as shown on the image on the right); this impedes breath flow.



3. Close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths, very slowly. With each breath, relax your shoulders and abdomen and allow the air to fill your lungs.

4. Inhale slowly through your nose and exhale through your mouth. It should take at least 2-3 times longer to exhale than to inhale. You do not need to force the air out on the exhale; just let your lungs empty naturally. With each breath, let go of your body's tension more and more. After your 10th breath open your eyes.



5. Smile! Take Blood Pressure again and write result on your Participants Results Form.

## WHY THIS WORKS...

Enjoy this exercise any time of day. It is quick, easy to do, and requires no equipment. A five minute breath break can have the same effect on your body as a 20 minute nap, relaxing your muscles, calming your blood pressure and heart rate, slowing respiration, and re-energizing your mind and body.

As it turns out, deep breathing is not only relaxing, it's been scientifically proven to affect the heart, the brain, digestion, the immune system — and maybe even the expression of genes.

Mladen Golubic, a physician in the Cleveland Clinic's Center for Integrative Medicine, says that breathing can have a profound impact on our physiology and our health.

"You can influence asthma; you can influence chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; you can influence heart failure," Golubic says. "There are studies that show that people who practice breathing exercises and have those conditions — they benefit."

Source: NPR, Just Breathe: Body Has A Built-In Stress Reliever

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/06/131734718/just-breathe-body-has-a-built-in-stress-reliever>