

Mindfulness Breathing Exercise

Excerpted from *Mindfulness for Emerging Adults*

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Exercise:

- Sit in a comfortable position either on a chair with your feet on the ground, or on the floor with your legs comfortably crossed. Sit tall with your spine extended so that your breath can enter your entire torso. Relax your shoulders down and move your shoulder blades towards each other.
- Place one hand on your abdomen and the other above your chest near your collarbone.
- Inhale deeply from the bottom of your abdomen. Feel the expansion pressing against your lower hand.
- Continue to fill your torso until you feel the hand on your upper chest expand. Hold the breath for one second.
- Release the breath from the chest to the abdomen. Picture a cup of water emptying from the top to the bottom as you exhale. Note how it feels to be empty of breath just for a second before your next inhale, then repeat this long, slow even breath nine more times. Return to the breath count as your mind wanders, which it naturally will.
- Return to natural breathing. Take a moment to stretch, and write about your experience in your centering journal. Don't worry if mindful breathing feels awkward or uncomfortable. It will feel more natural the more you practice. Remember, these are muscle responses. You can't throw a football like Tom Brady or play the trumpet like Wynton Marsalis right off the bat, either. Practice, practice, practice.