

Belly breathing for Anxiety

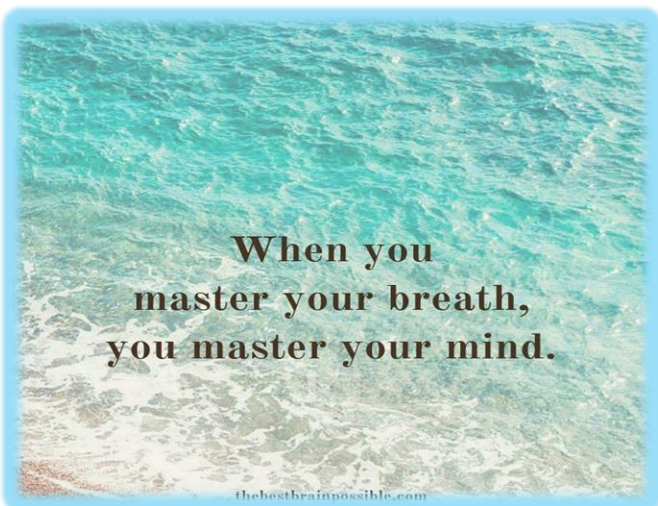
When we feel stressed or anxious, we often breathe from our chests and not our bellies. This is something we can become aware of.

It is common to take short, frequent chest breaths when we feel stressed or anxious and this may even lead to panic attacks.

Belly breathing is helpful for:

- Reducing stress levels
- Lowering blood pressure
- Strengthening diaphragm (the muscle that helps us breathe)
- Lowering heart rate
- Inducing a sense of balance or relaxation
- Boosting metabolism

When we breathe from our bellies it changes our central nervous system by lowering the harmful effects of the stress hormone cortisol in our bodies.



How to Belly Breathe:

- Find somewhere comfortable to sit
- Place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest
- Inhale through your nose and imagine your belly like a set of bellows inflating and filling with air, try to keep your chest still
- Feel your fingers over your belly opening and separating as you inhale
- Hold your breath for a few seconds
- Breathe out through your mouth and feel your belly shrink under your fingers
- Try to make the out breath longer than the inhale
- Repeat. Do you notice any changes?