

“Mini” Relaxation Exercises

- Mini relaxation exercises are focused *breathing techniques* that help reduce anxiety and tension **immediately**.
- You can do them with your eyes open or closed (but make sure that your eyes are open if you are driving! 😊).
- You can do them *any place, at any time*; no one will even know that you are doing them.

How to “do a mini” . . .

Switch over to diaphragmatic breathing; if you are having trouble, try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, or take a deep breath. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in and falling about an inch as you breathe out. If this is still difficult for you, lie on your back or on your stomach; you will be more aware of your breathing pattern. Remember, it is impossible to breathe diaphragmatically if you are holding your stomach in! So . . . relax your stomach muscles.

Mini Version 1

Count down very slowly to yourself from ten to zero. One number for each breath. 10 breaths. Thus, with the first diaphragmatic breath, you say “ten” to yourself, with the next breath you say “nine,” etc. If you start feeling light-headed or dizzy, slow down the counting and breath slower. When you get to “zero,” reassess how you are feeling.

Mini Version 2

As you inhale, count very slowly up to four; as you exhale, count slowly back down to one. Thus, as you inhale, you say to yourself “one, two, three, four,” as you exhale, you say to yourself “four, three, two, one.” Do this ten times.

When should I “do a mini”? . . .

While stuck in traffic . . . when you are put on “hold” . . . when you are waiting in your doctor’s waiting room . . . when someone says something which bothers you . . . at all red lights . . . waiting for a phone call . . . waiting for a blood draw . . . waiting on your ultrasound . . . when you feel overwhelmed by what you need to accomplish . . . while standing in line . . . when all you want to do is scream . . . when you’re having trouble falling asleep.

Give it a try. By breath 10, we believe you will have exhaled a large portion of your stress. You will be able to think more clearly, and will feel lighter.

You can conquer anything.