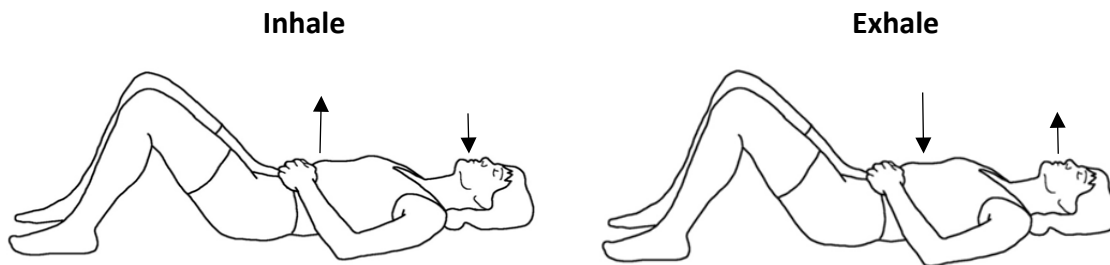


Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic or belly breathing is a very important technique to learn because it helps relax the sympathetic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system controls bladder function. By relaxing the sympathetic nervous system, one can learn to "settle down" the bladder and keep it from contracting when not wanted. In addition, diaphragmatic breathing is helpful in relaxing or lengthening your pelvic floor muscles. This can be helpful in reducing pelvic tightness or pain.

How to Diaphragmatic Breathe

- Start by lying on your back or reclining in a chair in a relaxed position with your tongue on the roof of your mouth and your jaw relaxed so that your teeth are not touching. Place your hands on your abdomen.
- Take a breath in through your nose, letting the abdomen expand and rise while you keep your upper chest relaxed. Exhale through your nose or mouth.
- Imagine the lengthening of your pelvic floor on inhale and the gentle recoil on exhale.
- Repeat for 5 minutes, 3 times per day.



Diaphragmatic Breathing and Your Pelvic Floor

- Try to focus on the relationship between your breathing diaphragm and the pelvic floor muscles (the pelvic diaphragm).
- As you breathe in let the pelvic floor relax/lengthen.
- As you exhale tighten and contract the pelvic floor (a Kegel exercise).
- Perform _____ repetitions, _____ times a day

