

# DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

## WHAT IS YOUR DIAPHRAGM AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

- Your diaphragm is a dome shaped muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen and is an important muscle for breathing
- When the diaphragm contracts it changes the pressure inside of the chest, which helps the lungs to expand and fill with air.
- When the diaphragm relaxes, it helps to push air out of the lungs.



## WHAT IS DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING?

- Diaphragmatic breathing is also called belly breathing
- This is when you fill your belly with air while keeping your upper chest relaxed

## HOW DO I PERFORM BELLY BREATHING?

1. Sit, stand, or lie down on your back keeping your neck and shoulders relaxed.
2. Place one hand on your upper chest and your other hand just below your rib cage over your belly.
3. Breathe in slowly through your nose, filling your belly with air. You should feel your stomach move out against your hand while the hand on your chest remains as still as possible.
4. Breathe out slowly and gently through pursed lips as if you were blowing out a candle. The hand on your belly should move down to its original position.
5. Repeat for 5-10 minutes.

## WHAT DOES DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING DO?

- Reduces stress by decreasing the "fight or flight" response and lessens the effects of the hormone cortisol on your body.
- Reduces blood pressure and heart rate.
- Increases the amount of oxygen in your blood stream, which can improve muscle function and muscle recovery.

