

make one change

a tweak to jump-start your better life

To rev up your mood, draw in that air (seaside or not).

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Shift your inhales to calm your system and spirit.

WORK KEEPING you up at night? There's a breath for that. The old maxim that breathing can ease stress is true—but for respiration to be a total release, you need the right technique, says Belisa Vranich, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist, wellness coach at Willspace in New York City and author of *Breathe*. “When most people take a deep breath, they bring their shoulders up and out. They’re using the smallest part of their lungs and activating the sympathetic nervous system, which also kicks in when you’re anxious or stressed,” says Vranich. Breathing is only calming when you take *lower* body breaths—they give you more oxygen. To huff the healthy way, put one hand on your belly. Feel your abdomen expand as you fill up with air through your mouth. As you exhale, blow out through your lips, contract your stomach and tuck your tailbone under so your hips move forward. Repeat this in-and-out cycle for three minutes. Here’s how it helps:

It works those abs

“You may feel strange pushing your stomach out as you breathe in,” says Vranich. You won’t undo all those crunches, promise. In fact, this counts as core work! Eighty percent of the lungs are in your sides and back, surrounding your abs, and each belly breath gives those muscles a chance to move.

It sheds your stress

“This type of conscious belly breathing is an active meditation,” says Vranich. “As you complete lower-body breaths and oxygenate your body, you relax naturally. That process takes your focus off of what’s troubling you, whether it’s your relationship, back pain or lingering soreness from a workout.”

It tames an angry tummy

Rather than reach for an antacid, put your lungs to work instead. “Belly breathing helps ease GI problems,” Vranich says. “With upper-body breaths, your middle is stagnant when it should be active. Moving the breath down stimulates your digestive system.” Try it a few times a day to settle a roiling stomach and feel soothed.

