

**Re-Integration Worksheet:
Maintaining Healthy Stress Management**

List the activities or coping strategies used during COVID teleworking to manage stress.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Which of these activities or coping strategies could you ***realistically*** continue to use on a routine basis once back at work?

NOTE: Routine ≠ Daily

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List the potential barriers to being able to engage in these activities or coping strategies.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Use the chart below to develop a schedule for implementing activities or coping strategies.
 Indicate an approximate time you plan to engage in the activity.
Note: You do not need to have an activity for every day initially. That is the end goal.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

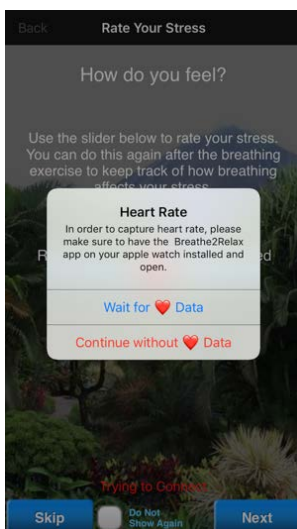
Description of Breathe2Relax App (FREE!!)



Breathe2Relax is a smartphone app for stress management developed by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology. It provides detailed information on the effects of stress on the body and instructions and practice exercises to help users learn the stress management skill called diaphragmatic breathing, also known as “belly breathing.” Breathing exercises have been documented to decrease the body’s ‘fight-or-flight’ (stress) response, and help with mood stabilization, anger control, and anxiety management. Breathe2Relax can be used as a stand-alone stress reduction tool, or can be used in *tandem with clinical care* directed by a healthcare worker. Additional support for stress and diaphragmatic breathing can be received through BHOP.

The key features of Breathe2Relax include:

- Customizable sessions with ability to change the overall length of the session, the breath rate, and other user preferences
- Rate stress before and after each practice session, graphing these responses to help users keep track of their progress
- Contains general information on the effects of stress on everyday living.
- Uses HealthKit and your Apple Watch device to measure your heart rate throughout your breathing exercise to help provide an even more complete picture of the relaxation experienced



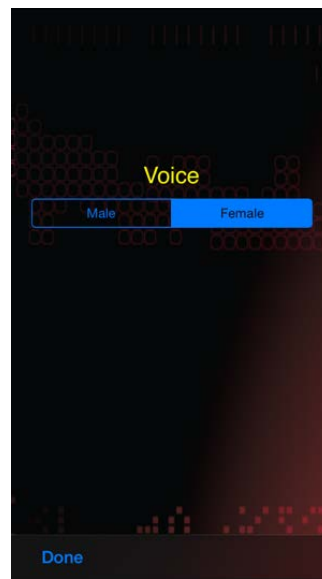
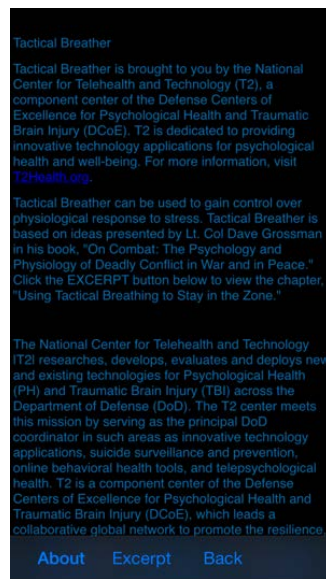
Description of Tactical Breather App (FREE!!)



Tactical Breather is a smartphone app which emphasizes mindfulness and breathing exercises to control stress, emotions, physiological responses to stress, and increase concentration. Tactical Breather uses mostly verbal instruction with guided teachings on the importance of breathing for physiological stability and how best to engage in simple exercises to prevent shallow inhalations or exhalations. While breathing, the app offers a visual aid designed as a circle with a timer that changes color as one follows the instructed audio. The app does not offer long term tracking or personalized user features related to one's health. This app can be *used as part of your individual therapy*, or just as a relaxation tool if you are not in any kind of therapy. Additional support for stress management can be received through BHOP.

The key features of Tactical Breather include:

- Introduction Narrative to the Benefits of Tactical Breathing
- Tutorial on how to use Tactical Breathing
- Practice Mode to help you learn
- Settings Page to change voice gender and graphics preferences
- Excerpt Page provided by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman that displays several chapters from his book



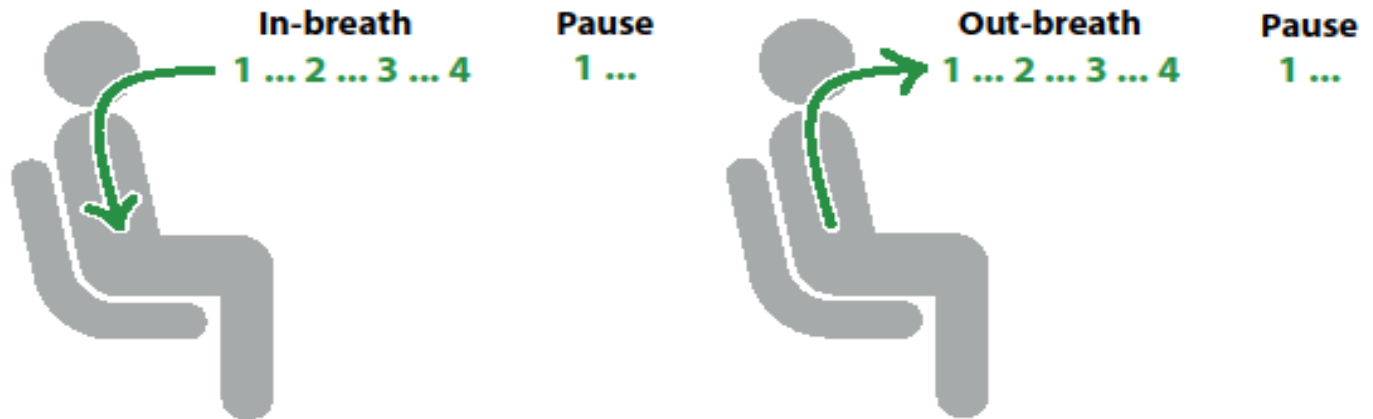
Breathing Retraining

Shallow, quick breathing is one of the hallmarks of stress. This type of breathing can lead to feeling dizziness, tingling sensations, and confusion, all of which further adds to stress. Abdominal breathing is the opposite of this stressed breathing pattern. Babies demonstrate abdominal breathing when in restful sleep. Abdominal breathing stimulates the part of our nervous system that slows down the heart and the body, leading to a feeling of calmness and peace. Right now, you can rest one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest and notice how you are breathing. If most of the movement is in your chest, you can definitely benefit from practicing the habit of abdominal breathing. If, however, your abdomen was gently rising and falling like a balloon being gently inflated and deflated, congratulations, you're already breathing in a calming and health promoting way. You can still benefit from daily practice to ensure that you are able breathe from the abdomen whenever you want, even when feeling anxious and stressed. Here are the instructions for practicing abdominal breathing.

1. Find a comfortable and quiet location. Sit straight up or lie down so that you can have full expansion of your lungs.
2. Inhale slowly and deeply, letting your abdomen move outward in a relaxed and automatic way as the air fills your lungs.
3. After you've taken a full breath, exhale slowly and fully. Focus attention on your breath as it flows from your body, noticing the feel of the air as it moves past the nostrils.
4. Breathe deeply and fully in with normal rate and depth of breathing, using smooth inhalations and exhalations. Count with each exhalation, like this: full deep inhalation...full smooth exhalation, count "one." Repeat until you reach ten, and then start again at one.
5. Expand the diaphragm on the breath in and keep chest still.
6. Practice either this breathing exercise up to twice daily, 10 minutes each time.

Relaxed Breathing

When we are anxious or threatened our breathing speeds up in order to get our body ready for danger. Relaxed breathing (sometimes called abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing) signals the body that it is safe to relax. Relaxed breathing is *slower* and *deeper* than normal breathing, and it happens lower in the body (the belly rather than the chest).



How to do relaxed breathing

- To practice make sure you are sitting or lying comfortably.
- Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so.
- Try to breathe through your nose rather than your mouth.
- Deliberately slow your breathing down. Breathe in to a count of 4, pause for a moment, then breathe out to a count of four.
- Make sure that your breaths are smooth, steady, and continuous - not jerky.
- Pay particular attention to your out-breath - make sure it is smooth and steady.

Am I doing it right? What should I be paying attention to?

- Relaxed breathing should be low down in the abdomen (belly), and not high in the chest. You can check this by putting one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Try to keep the top hand still, your breathing should only move the bottom hand.
- Focus your attention on your breath - some people find it helpful to count in their head to begin with ("In ... two ... three ... four ... pause ... Out ... two ... three ... four ... pause ...").

How long and how often?

- Try breathing in a relaxed way for at least a few minutes at a time – it might take a few minutes for you to notice an effect. If you are comfortable, aim for 5-10 minutes.
- Try to practice regularly – perhaps three times a day

Variations and troubleshooting

- Find a slow breathing rhythm that is comfortable for you. Counting to 4 isn't an absolute rule. Try 3 or 5. The important thing is that the breathing is slow and steady.
- Some people find the sensation of relaxing to be unusual or uncomfortable at first but this normally passes with practice. Do persist and keep practising.