



封面故事

在恬靜的森林中，住著一位溫柔的巨人。與牠龐大的身軀形成反差的是，牠那使人放鬆、自在的魔力。在這本小冊子中，牠將會公開活得如此悠然自得的秘訣，帶領小鳥和途人走進身心洗滌之旅……



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走進
觸不到
的社區。

VOL. 03

**Introducing the Mighty “2ools”:
Diaphragmatic Breathing &
Muscle Relaxation**



**“Relaxing is easy
as eating a piece of cake!
Won’t simply laying
on the bed do the job?”**

Does lying down mean we are fully relaxing?

For some people, relaxing is no hard task, but sometimes when stress is overwhelming, they may still feel highly tense even after taking regular rest.

Last time, we introduced the concept of stress, so this time, of course, we will discuss an important technique for stress relief: **relaxation**.

Revisiting relaxation from the previous issue

Effective stress management means appropriately regulating stress. In the slow-paced Blue Zone areas, there are regular stress-reducing activities, such as Okinawan women practicing tea ceremonies.

In a fast-paced metropolis like Hong Kong, relaxation practices can help us alleviate stress. Relaxation has a close relationship with the nervous system mentioned in the previous issue.

Do you remember the “Fight-or-flight Response” and the “relaxation response”? Relaxation techniques serve as a “brake” that allows our bodies to relax.

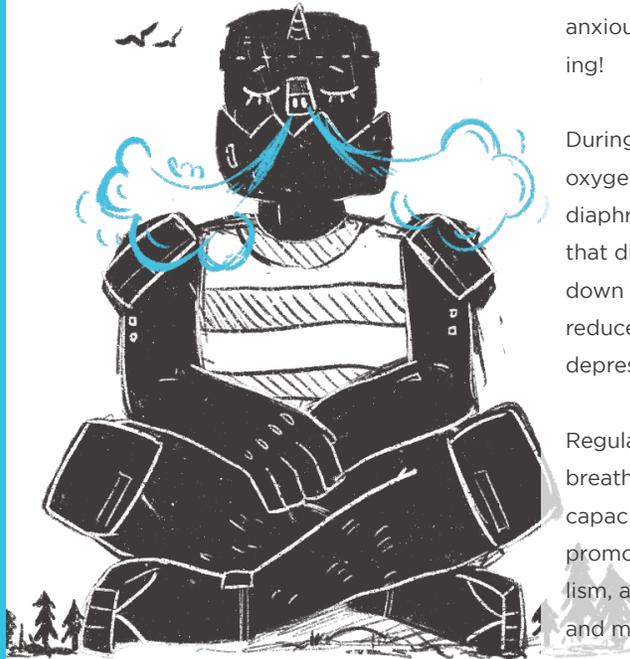
Preparation

Before engaging in relaxation exercises, there are the following preparations:

- ▶ Loosen tight clothing and remove accessories.
- ▶ Turn off phones and noisy devices.
- ▶ Dim the lights.
- ▶ Maintain a moderate room temperature. During the relaxation process, you may feel cool, so it's advisable to have loose outerwear or a shawl for warmth.
- ▶ Find a comfortable position and sit down to practice relaxation. When sitting, ensure that your back is against the chair back and place your feet flat on the ground.

The mighty "2ools"

1 Diaphragmatic Breathing

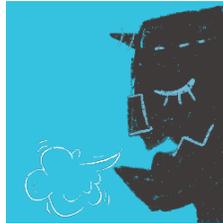


When you feel stressed, irritable, or anxious, try out diaphragmatic breathing!

During diaphragmatic breathing, more oxygen enters the lungs as the diaphragm expands. Research shows that diaphragmatic breathing helps slow down heart rate, induces relaxation, and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Regular practice of diaphragmatic breathing can help strengthen lung capacity, enhance³ exercise performance, promote blood circulation and metabolism, and achieve overall improvement and maintenance of the body.

Points to Note



- 1 Focus on your breath and close your eyes. Put your right hand on your abdomen and your left hand on your chest. This helps observing whether you are doing the exercise correctly. While breathing, your abdomen and chest should move at the same time.
- 2 Inhale deeply and slowly through your nose. While inhaling, it is natural that your abdomen expands. Hold your breath for a moment.
- 3 Exhale slowly through your mouth.
- 4 After exhaling completely, slowly inhale the next breath and repeat the practice 5 to 10 times.



It is recommended to practice twice a day for 5 minutes each time. The best times to practice are after waking up and before going to bed. Remember to find more opportunities to practice!

Consistency and continuous practice are necessary to be able to flexibly apply diaphragmatic breathing in your daily life.

Frequently Asked Questions

- ▶ Beginners may initially need to exert effort and focus during the practice. After some time of practice, they can release their hands and focus solely on their breathing.
- ▶ If discomfort arises during the practice, it is important to stop and not force oneself.
- ▶ If sitting upright does not yield noticeable effects, one can try lying down in a supine position with a large font type, as the rise and fall of the abdomen will become more apparent.
- ▶ Breathe in through the nose and exhale through the mouth. When exhaling, try to expel all the air, as this helps expand the diaphragm for the next inhalation.
- ▶ If you find it challenging, you can gently apply pressure to the abdomen during exhalation and then release the pressure with the next inhalation, focusing on the sensation of the abdomen rising.

The mighty “2ools”

2 Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

When a person remains in a state of tension for an extended period, their muscles can become unconsciously tense, making it difficult to relax. The principle of progressive muscle relaxation exercises is to relax the body's muscles to help alleviate the sense of tension.

Through repeated practice, we become more adept at relaxing our muscles and better equipped to cope with stressful situations, leading to overall relaxation of the body and mind.



Points to Note

- 1 Systematically tense and then relax different muscle groups.
- 2 Pay close attention to the sensations of tension and relaxation in each muscle group.
- 3 When inhaling, exert force to tense the muscles; when exhaling, gradually relax them, and observe the difference between tension and relaxation.
- 4 Repeat each muscle group twice and, once you feel that all muscle groups have relaxed, you can sit quietly for a while.

Frequently Asked Questions

- ▶ Individuals with injuries or high blood pressure should avoid tensing their muscles and focus solely on muscle relaxation, paying attention to the current sensations.
- ▶ If cramping or discomfort occurs during the practice, it is important to stop immediately.
- ▶ Trying to relax too forcefully can have counterproductive effects. It is best to practice regularly with a calm mindset, and the feeling of relaxation will gradually emerge.
- ▶ Effectively mastering progressive muscle relaxation is not an overnight process. By practicing at home once or twice a day, for 15 to 20 minutes each time, over time, you will experience the benefits of muscle relaxation exercises.



Goal Setting

The above relaxation techniques require consistent practice to achieve physical and mental well-being. Let's set a goal together and start practicing these relaxation methods for the next week.

Goal

I will practice _____ times in the coming week

I will practice on every _____ at _____ am/pm

You may write down your feelings before and after the exercise:

SMART Goal Setting

- S**PECIFIC
- M**EASURABLE
- A**CHIEVABLE
- R**ELEVANT
- T**IME-SPECIFIC

We have introduced two scientifically-proven relaxation skills in this booklet. We hope everyone can practice them consistently and relieve stress as early as possible to prevent physiological and psychological distress caused by stress.

In the next session, we will explore how to promote well-being through dietary nutrition.

