**Deep Breathing Exercise**

In this exercise we are going to help you become more aware of your breathing and become mindful of what a deep breath versus a shallow breath feels like. The oxygen you get from deep breathing helps you to relax. This exercise can be done anywhere…in class, just before you go to bed. The more it is practiced, the more natural it will become, improving your

mind and body’s balanced rhythm.

* Find a relaxed comfortable position---seated on a chair or on a cushion on the floor. Keep your back upright but not too tight. Let your hands rest wherever you are comfortable.
* If you feel comfortable doing so, close your eyes. Let yourself relax and become curious about the sensations in your body, the connection with the floor or the chair. Scan your body for tension and try to relax any areas of tightness or tension.
* Now begin to tune into your breath in your body. Feel the natural flow of breath. You don’t need to do anything to change your breath right now. Just notice where you feel your breath in your body.
* Now place one hand on your chest and the other hand on your abdomen. When you take a deep breath in, try to make the hand on your abdomen rise higher than the one on your chest. This expands your diaphragm and pulls air fully into your lungs.
* Take a slow deep breath in through your nose for a count of 4.
* Pause for however long you feel comfortable.
* Then slowly exhale for a count of 6, contracting your abdominal muscles to completely release the air in your lungs. Let your shoulders and the muscles of your upper body relax with the exhalation.
* Again, slowly inhale for a count of 4.
* Then slowly exhale for a count of 6.

*[Repeat this cycle for a total of twenty deep breaths.]*

* When you are ready, open your eyes and bring your focus back into the room

**Check in:**

* What did you notice during this exercise? What was your mind and body doing?
* How did it feel to do the exercise? Was there anything hard about this practice?
* How do you feel now as compared to when we started?