

# Breathing

Breathing plays an essential role in helping calm our threat system down.

In this guide, we highlight the importance of connecting with your breathing pattern to help you feel safe, when you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed.

## Chest breathing and stomach breathing

When we breathe, we either use chest breathing or stomach breathing.

Identify how you breathe: hold one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach and notice where your breath is going.

### Chest breathing:

Chest breathing is shallow and often irregular and rapid. People that experience anxiety or have a more slouched posture are more likely to chest breathe and may experience breath holding, hyperventilation, shortness of breath & increase heart rate.

### Stomach Breathing:

With stomach breathing the breath is deeper and more rhythmical, the breathing system is more efficient at producing energy from oxygen and removing carbon dioxide which can have many benefits — especially by lowering the heart rate and regulating blood pressure all of which helps decrease the stress hormone cortisol and aids relaxation.

When our body and mind is responding to the perception of a threat, using a breathing technique can support you to engage in intentional stomach breathing. This signals back to your body that there is no threat, as breathing slowly and becoming relaxed is inconsistent with the threat.