



## INHALE, EXHALE. AND REPEAT!

BY KATIE ALSIN

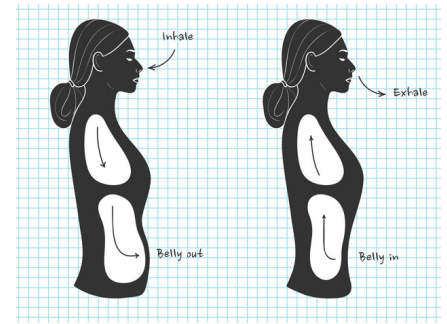
New Year, New You, New Breathing! In this week's newsletter, we learn how to enhance your rest and recuperation through diaphragmatic breathing! We can all use a little bit more of that this year anyway.

### So what is diaphragmatic breathing?

Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as abdominal or belly breathing, is when you engage your diaphragm muscle to increase your inhalation and exhalation. As we get older, our normal pattern of breathing can start coming from more of our chest rather than diaphragm, resulting in a shallower inhale and exhale.

**Curious yet? Here's how it all works:** Your diaphragm sits just below your lungs. When you inhale, it contracts your diaphragm and creates negative pressure around your lungs, filling them with air. When you exhale and relax your diaphragm, it helps press air out of your lungs. This helps to foster a full exchange of oxygen within the lungs and to help strengthen your lungs to make them more efficient at breathing!

**Okay but why try this?** Diaphragmatic breathing is more than more oxygen in and more oxygen out. It's been linked to decreasing the effect of the cortisol hormone of your body (aka stress), improving attention span and lung efficiency and decreasing tension in the body. To see these effects, try incorporating this into your daily routine for about 5-10 minutes each day.



BELLY BREATHING

### Let's try it out!

Lay down on your back on a flat surface with knees bent or in a comfortable upright seated position. Place your left hand on your chest and right hand on your belly button. Take a few breaths here and feel how your hands might or might not be moving.

Inhaling through your nose, try to push your right hand toward the sky by expanding your belly. Picture your diaphragm pressing towards your hips and your lungs inflating.

Slowly exhale through your mouth (as if you were blowing into a balloon) and feel your right-hand lower towards the floor or into your chest. Think of bringing your belly button closer to your spine and picture your lungs deflating.

Your left hand should be moving significantly less than your right hand throughout these breaths.



Repeat as desired! Ways to challenge yourself: try a 4-second inhale and 4-second exhale, try it seated, try it standing, on your commute, before a task or to help with relaxing you before you fall asleep.



### About Katie Alsin, LAT, ATC

Katie is a certified Athletic Trainer out of the greater Seattle, WA area. Whether it's during an appointment with a team member or out visiting a workstation, she loves

patient education and teaching her team members about recovery tips and tricks. When she's not at work, you can usually find her chasing down a sunset or whipping up a new recipe in the kitchen!

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