

RELAXATION

Breathing exercises are an excellent relaxation tool. Changing our breathing from that produced by the stress response (rapid and shallow) to slow, calm, even breathing, hones our focus, gives us mental clarity, improves our fine motor movements, timing, balance and coordination, and gives us a sense of control.

Centring Breathing

Centring is breathing that starts from your centre of gravity (behind your navel).

- Either position yourself at an 'at ease' standing position, sitting comfortably back in a chair with a wide expanded chest cavity and dropped shoulders and feet flat on the ground, or lying with legs uncrossed
- Close, or lower, your eyes
- Place one hand on your stomach just below your navel, and your other hand on top
- Breathe in through your nose so your stomach and hand *rise* as you inhale
- Breathe out through your mouth so your stomach and hand *fall* as the air goes out
- Keep breathing in and out in this manner with your attention totally focused on your breathing, and nothing else
- Try to make the exhalation equal, or slightly longer than, the inhalation (3-4 seconds)
- Breathe away naturally and unforced – 1-2-3-4, hold for 1-2, and then breathe out 1-2-3-4-5-6 ...

