

Since stress is here to stay, everyone (adults and children) needs to **develop methods to relax**. Relaxation is needed to lower blood pressure, respiration, and pulse rate, as well as release muscle tension, and ease emotional strain. **Deep breathing techniques and exercise help you feel successful and in control**. Try to practice deep breathing once a day and build up to 5-10 minutes a day.

There are many variations of deep breathing. They all involve breathing slowly and deeply and can all be done sitting in a chair. Include your children in your deep breathing sessions. It will help them relax, too.

### Ocean Breath

For thousands of years the ocean has breathed against the shores of country after country. Learn this breath while seated in a comfortable cross-legged position on the floor or seated in a chair with your feet on the floor. Inhale and exhale deeply through the mouth. On the exhales, begin to tone the back of the throat, slightly constricting the passage of air. Imagine that you are fogging up a pair of glasses. Once you are comfortable with the exhale, begin to apply the same toning of the throat to the inhales. This is where the name of the breath comes from: it sounds like the ocean. (It also sounds like Darth Vader.)

### Snake Breath

When they are coiled and resting, snakes look around calmly, and when they move, they are slow and smooth. Sit up tall. Take a deep breath in, filling up your whole body. Pause and breathe out slowly and smoothly making a hissing sound for as long as you can. Repeat for 3-5 rounds, feeling yourself slow down and become calmer each time.

### Elephant Breath

Elephants shower themselves with their own trunks. Choose something to shower yourself with — sparkles, love, laughter, strength. Stand with your feet wide apart. Link your hands and dangle your arms in front of you like an elephant trunk. Inhale through your nose as you raise your arms high above your head and lean back. Exhale through your mouth as you swing your arms down through your legs. Repeat for 3 rounds.

### Bunny Breath

Bunnies are very alert. Keep yourself awake and alert with this cleansing breath. Sit on your shins with your back straight, shoulders wide and chest lifted (or sit cross legged or in a chair if that feels better). Keeping your chin down, take three big sniffs, one right after the other. Then exhale on a long release, as though you are sighing out through your nostrils. Repeat for 5 to 7 rounds.