

## Slow Breathing Technique

Instructions: It is important to practice this technique until you are able to use it automatically in anxiety-provoking situations. For the next 3 weeks at least you should practice this slow breathing technique for about 5 minutes at a time, 4 times per day. There are two reasons for this. The first is that frequent and regular practice will make the technique second nature to you. It will thus be more likely that you use it even when your mind is clouded by anxiety. The second reason is that regular practice will have the result that this healthy breathing style becomes your natural breathing rate and style.

Some people worry about the fact that counting their breathing rate makes them too conscious of it, and alters it somehow. This is probably true to a small extent, but not enough to really matter.

- Take a medium sized breath in, hold it and count to 6
- When you get to 6, think "relax" and breathe out--try to feel as though you are releasing tension as you breathe out
- Next breathe in for 3 seconds and out for 3 seconds, in a smooth, light way  
At the end of each minute (after 10 breaths), hold your breath again for 6 seconds, think "relax", breathe out, and then continue breathing in the 6-second cycle for another minute