

## Exercise 2 – Relaxation with the Relaxator

**Relaxation.** Set aside a moment for yourself, sit down comfortably and close your eyes. Become aware of your breathing and take a few big, deep breaths. Take fewer and deeper breaths than usual and breathe in through the nose. Fill up the entire abdominal area and chest with air. Exhale through the Relaxator. This way of breathing exercises the breathing muscles in your abdomen and chest and makes them relax.

After a few minutes you can start breathing normally again. Breathe in slowly and calmly through the nose and breathe out through the Relaxator. Your abdomen slowly expands on inhalation. Imagine that the inhaled air ends up right below the navel. The upper part of your chest and your shoulders remain still, whereas the lower part of your chest may move a bit. The stomach slowly contract on exhalation. Notice that exhalation is associated with relaxation. Your relaxation increases with each exhalation. Practice this relaxation exercise for 5 to 15 minutes.

## The Method of Conscious Breathing

We have developed the method Conscious Breathing where the Relaxator is an important tool. The method is aimed at improving breathing and is based on five simple principles:

Our breathing should be done in the

- NOSE – in and out through the nose
- ABDOMEN – air flow into the stomach



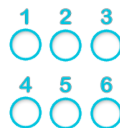
[www.relaxator.net](http://www.relaxator.net)

Our breathing should be

- RELAXED, RHYTHMIC, QUIET

## Storage, Cleaning, Marking

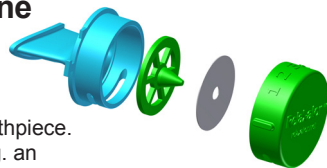
Store the Relaxator in the accompanying plastic box. Clean the Relaxator by rinsing it in warm water or placing it in warm water with some washing-up liquid. Write your name in marker on the key strap. The storage box also has numbered circles that you can tick to differentiate it from other Relaxators.



## Disassembling & Removal of Inner Membrane

The Relaxator contains a rubber membrane to prevent inhalation through the mouth. This is especially useful if you are used to inhaling through the mouth, but can be removed if required.

The Relaxator is disassembled by pulling off the back from the mouthpiece. Remove the membrane and holder ("wagon wheel") by inserting e.g. an ordinary table knife through the mouth piece to push out the membrane. Assemble the Relaxator by insert the wagon wheel and pressing the back piece and the mouthpiece together. NOTE: Make sure that the little pin on the mouthpiece ends up in front of the numbers on the back piece.



## Manufacture

The Relaxator is developed and manufactured in Sweden using recyclable ABS plastic. It contains no phthalates or Bisphenol A. The storage box is made of recyclable polypropylene. The colours as well as the plastic material are approved for use with foodstuffs intended for human consumption. The Relaxator is a class I medical device with CE mark approval.



## Keep in Mind

Breathing exercises affect all processes in the body and may cause fast changes in the blood flow to your brain, heart, liver, respiratory tract, as well as other organs. Hence, if your body is not in full balance and if you are on medication, it is recommended that you proceed carefully when you start using the Relaxator.



## The Relaxator Prevents Oxygen Deficiency

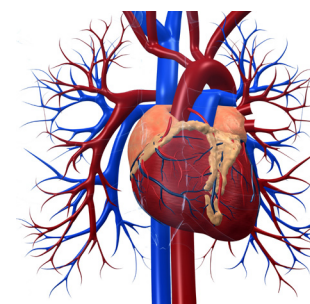
We take approximately 25,000 breaths per day and when we breathe in a way which is not optimal, we develop oxygen deficiency in our bodies. The Relaxator breathing trainer helps you achieve optimum breathing, thereby increasing the oxygenation of your body. The Relaxator helps make breathing more rhythmical and relaxed while at the same time stimulating the diaphragm. The air then ends up down in the stomach which makes the absorption of oxygen more efficient. You can use the Relaxator both in acute situations such as asthma attacks, high stress and anxiety and for preventive purposes. NOTE: The Relaxator is not a substitute for medicines.

## Large Oxygen Consumers

All body processes depend on oxygen. The most oxygen-thirsty organs are the brain, the heart and all the muscles. Although the brain represents only two per cent of the body weight, it uses as much as fifteen per cent of the oxygen we consume. Our heart beats approx. 100,000 times per day and is also a large consumer of oxygen. The Relaxator helps all of our organs and muscles get the amount of oxygen they need.



Brain



Heart



Muscles

## Why Do We Breathe?

- 1. If we stop breathing, we die.** Oxygen is vital to all of our organs and is used for energy production in the body. If we stopped breathing, we would not survive for more than a couple of minutes due to lack of energy.
- 2. We need a balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide.** Our breathing maintains a balance between the body's use of oxygen and the production of carbon dioxide. An imbalance causes oxygen deficiency and affects the whole body negatively.
- 3. The diaphragm stimulates vital organs.** The diaphragm is our most important breathing muscle. Good diaphragmatic breathing provides rhythmic stimulation of the heart, stomach, liver, intestines and lymphatic system. The rhythmic stimulation of these organs by the diaphragm helps them perform their work.
- 4. To maintain the blood's pH balance.** A balanced blood pH is of great physiological significance for the functioning of the body and our breathing is the most important system for maintaining optimum pH.

## Breaking Bad Breathing Habits with the Relaxator

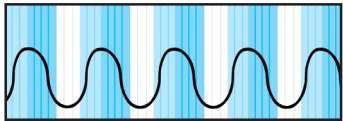
**Take control over your breathing.** Many of us experience too much stress in our lives, which leads to stressed breathing. When long-term stress becomes permanent, our way of breathing changes, which creates a vicious circle. When our breathing is stressed, the brain interprets this as signalling a threat and activates the body's fight/flight system. This leads to the secretion of stress hormones, while digestion and immunessystem are put on the backburner. The Relaxator helps you take control over your breathing, break the vicious stress circle and regain optimum breathing which is rhythmic and harmonic.

**Train your stomach and breathing muscles.** When you exhale with resistance you will exercise your abdominal and breathing muscles.

**Make sure that the air passes down in the diaphragm.** The Relaxator stimulates the diaphragm to function optimally. Since the diaphragm is our most important respiration muscle, correct breathing using the diaphragm enables more inhaled air to enter into the abdomen, which makes oxygen absorption more efficient.

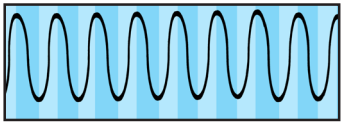
**Increase relaxation with extended exhalation.** When you breathe through the Relaxator, you extend the exhalation, which makes your body relax. Inhalation is an active process accompanied, among other things, by an increase in the pulse rate, whereas exhalation is a passive, relaxing process which reduces the pulse rate. Greater relaxation makes you experience less stress and more harmony. When your body is more relaxed, you function better and can make more with less efforts.

## Our Six Most Common Breathing Patterns (during rest)



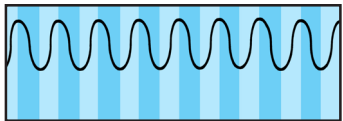
### 1. Optimum breathing

6–12 breaths per minute, 2–3 s in, 3–4 s out, 2–3 s pause. Breathing is in and out through the nose and the breathing is relaxed and rhythmic. The upper part of the chest is still, while the abdomen softly expands on inhalation and contract on exhalation.



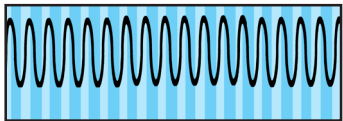
### 2. Overbreathing (gives oxygen deficiency)

14–18 breaths per minute. Larger and more frequent breaths than the optimum. A hidden form of hyperventilation which can be hard to spot that the breathing exceeds the needs of the body.



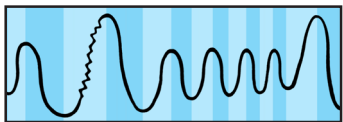
### 3. Chest breathing (gives oxygen deficiency)

14–18 breaths per minute. Short and shallow breaths high up in the chest. A feeling that you do not breathe at all or that you breathe too little. Possibly a somewhat shrunken posture.



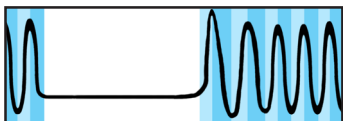
### 4. Dog panting (gives oxygen deficiency)

22–30 breaths per minute. Heavy overbreathing (hyperventilation). Quick breaths high up in the chest. The mouth is often open. The upper part of the chest heaves upon inhalation.



### 5. Chaotic breathing (gives oxygen deficiency)

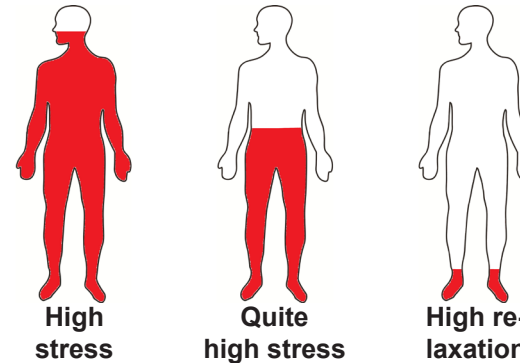
Irregular. Audible exhalation – clearing of throat, sighs, moans, coughs, snoring, spasmodic exhalation. Audible inhalation – sniffles, snorts, snoring. Big breaths before talking, gasping for air.



### 6. Periodic breathing (gives oxygen deficiency)

An intermission followed by faster breathing. Breathing “gets stuck” (you “forget” to breathe) during concentration. The mouth is often open. Daytime: concentration apnea. Night-time: sleep apnea.

## Focus on your Breathing to Reduce Stress and Anxiety



The increasing amount of impressions and activities in our daily lives could give a stressed brain. A stressed brain could lead to a larger extent of worrying thoughts about the future or moaning about yesterday's problem. We risk to get stuck in our mind and “live our lives in our heads”.

As you focus your thoughts on your breathing you are quieting your critical and judgmental inner voice. The Relaxator helps you to stay focused on your breathing and thereby reduce anxiety and stress and increase relaxation and presence.

## When do I Use the Relaxator?

The Relaxator can be used with great benefit when you experience high stress, low energy, pain, coughing, anxiety attacks, asthma and allergy attacks, childbirth, etc. The Relaxator can also be used preventively in exercises to achieve better breathing, for example, in the car, in front of the TV, when you do your homework or read the paper, in front of the computer, at work, prior to important meetings, during meditation, before bedtime, before, during or after working out, at the golf course, during pregnancy, etc.

## How Do I Use the Relaxator?

1. Set a resistance of your choice by turning the Relaxator mouthpiece to adjust the vent. There are 5 seamless positions: the smaller the opening, the greater the resistance. 5 is the heaviest resistance and 1 is the lightest. The aim is to achieve a relaxed and rhythmical breathing, so it is recommended that you increase the resistance slowly and gradually to make sure your breathing is relaxed.
2. Bring the Relaxator to your mouth. Let it rest gently between the lips for greatest relaxation (if possible, refrain from biting it with your teeth).
3. Inhale calmly through your nose – just let the air in. At inhalation the air passes into the abdominal area. The abdomen slowly expands while the upper part of the chest and shoulders remain still. The lower part of the chest may also move a little.
4. Exhale slowly and calmly through the mouth/the Relaxator. At exhalation your abdomen and lower part of the chest should slowly contract while the upper part of the chest and shoulders remain still.
5. Using the Relaxator fifteen minutes once or twice a day gives good results. There is no upper limit for how long time it may be used. Some people opt to use it for 1–2 hours a day. An optimal respiration of 12 breaths per minute or less with 0.5 litres of air per breath is achieved when the resistance is set to 3–4.
6. Aim to maintain a relaxed, non-strained breathing when you use the Relaxator. There is no need to push yourself too hard in order to achieve results. Note how you breathe after having used the Relaxator. If your breathing is relaxed and rhythmic, the Relaxator is set it to a suitable resistance.

## Exercise 1 – Physical Activity with the Relaxator

**Counting steps.** Walk, jog or ride a bicycle while counting the number of steps/pedal turns on inhalation and the number of steps/turns on exhalation. Since an extended exhalation increases relaxation, it is good to do more steps/turns during exhalation than during inhalation, for example, 3 on inhalation and 6 on exhalation. Using the Relaxator will make it easier for you to extend the exhalation. Find a rhythm that works for you while at the same make sure you feel relaxed and allow yourself to have fun. The rhythm may also vary depending on shape, speed, whether the course runs uphill or downhill, etc.