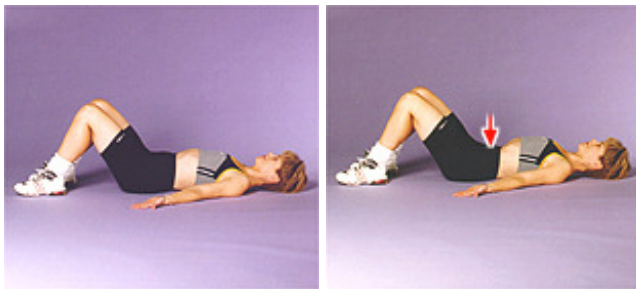


Abdominal Breathing

Most people breath into their upper chest. This is termed "paradoxical" breathing. Proper breathing is abdominal breathing, which uses the diaphragm to bring air into the lower lung fields.

To perform, place one hand on top of the other over your belly button. As you inhale, allow the air to enter your **lower** lung fields. Your belly should rise up **first** and higher than your chest. As you exhale relax the stomach muscles and repeat.

Performing this alone can help alleviate discomfort in the upper back, lower back and neck areas.



Abdominal Hollowing

Abdominal hollowing is simply the exhale position of abdominal breathing taken one step further.

As you continue to fully exhale, suck in your lower abdominal muscles (belly button) toward the spine to the point of tightness. As you force air out, you should feel the muscles **below** the belly button get tight. Practice holding your lower abdominals tight while you breath.

Abdominal hollowing should be performed throughout your activities of daily living. When lifting groceries, children, or shovelling as well as when getting out of bed in the morning and rising from a seated position, suck in the abdominals in order to stabilize and protect your low back.