

Bellows Breathing

In a sitting position, demonstrate to your client first.

1. Put one hand on your abdomen, below your naval.
2. Put one hand on your ribs, above your heart.
3. Take a slow deep breath through your nose into your belly. As you do, you will feel your abdominal muscles pushing out. Don't move your upper ribs. Don't lift your shoulders. Let your belly do the work of bringing the air in and moving the air back out.
4. Now exhale slowly, through your nose, as your abdomen contracts back in.
(If this is difficult to feel, try it lying down. You may also put a book on your abdomen and move it up and down with your abdominal movement for more sensory-motor feedback.)

Now that you have a sense of moving the lower abdominal muscles, you will progress to filling your torso with air, all the way to the top of your ribcage, expanding your lower ribcage, then doing focused bellows breathing.

With your mouth closed, and your ribcage lifted, begin to breathe through your nose with short, sharp abdominal movements, beginning and ending on an exhale. You may need to blow your nose first! Keep one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Keep your chest lifted. Feel what is moving with your hands (the navel area). Do not let your upper chest help. This is an abdominal breathing exercise.

1. Beginning and ending with an exhale, you will do 15 quick repetitions, three times, with a full breath in between.
2. Take one, slow inhalation, filling your lungs with air 360° from the bottom to the top of your rib cage.
3. Then slowly exhale the air from the bottom up.
4. Slowly inhale from the bottom up, exhale/inhale rapidly 15 times, letting your belly do the work. Repeat the whole sequence three times.

Never do this exercise standing. Do it lying down to begin with, if it's too difficult to do in a sitting position. Don't do it on a full stomach. If you get light headed, simply rest for a moment and then begin again.