

Boice Counseling

Deep Breathing

Do you get a 10 minute break? If you do, try this technique. Try it a few times just to make sure you get the hang of it.

Technique Rationale: Deep Breathing regulates your breath. You are more easily relaxed when there is sufficient oxygen in your bloodstream, and your lungs. The count of seven will ensure that your mind is off your problem or stressor and fully on the breathing. Some people need the reminder that breathing is important because they literally forget to breathe. The breath becomes shallow and constricted. Deep breathing opens them.

Technique: Close your eyes. Remind yourself that nothing else matters right now. This is the only thing in your life. Everything else is on hold. Sit with your back straight, arms and legs uncrossed, for about 20 seconds, paying attention to, but not changing, your breathing.

- **Breathe in.** With your fingers, count 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, saying those numbers silently to yourself. Make sure you breathe slowly enough that it lasts for the full count.
- Once you have breathed in, counting to seven, **hold your breath** to the count of seven (again, your fingers help you count).
- After that, **breathe out** to the count of seven. This is the hard part.
- Once you have breathed out, **count to seven without breathing in.** Once you finish this counting, repeat the procedure. Inhale counting to seven, hold counting to seven, exhale counting to seven, hold counting to seven, inhale counting to seven etc.

Don't be concerned if you have to start over or if you missed a number. You will notice quickly whether you can last for a seven count or need to go to a higher number. If you smoke, you may have to work your way up to seven.

Note: After you've repeated this between 5-10 times, just be still. Please, don't rush back to work. Get back on time, just be leisurely and remember you took the time out to relax. Take the relaxation with you. Remember, you can have this relaxation anytime. Some people go home and make an audiotape using this idea and bring it in their cassette player to work for those shorter breaks.

*If you need or want more help getting relaxed, give a call or e-mail me:
(585) 802-1273, donboice@boicecounseling.com*

