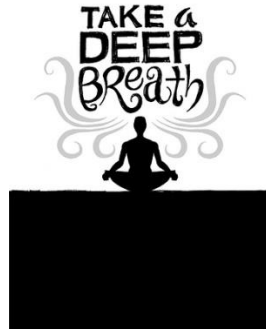


Taking a Break



Why is it important to take a break?

When we become angry and lose our cool, we go into fight or flight mode and we experience a rush of adrenaline in our body. Our heart beats faster, our breath accelerates, we experience a rush of energy or other physical symptoms. Research shows that it can take about 20 minutes or longer for the adrenaline rush to pass. Taking a break to allow our body to calm down is not only helpful but also necessary in order to prevent our anger and the situation from escalating.

Here are some simple relaxation tools you can practice while taking a break, which can help soothe angry feelings.

Try these simple steps:

- **Breathe deeply, from your diaphragm.** Breathing from your chest won't relax you, so picture your breath coming up from your "gut." Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Make sure the exhale is longer than the inhale...it helps to count. -Try counting to four on the in-breath and 8 on the out-breath.
- **Slowly repeat a calming word or phrase,** such as "relax" or "take it easy." Keep repeating it to yourself while breathing deeply.
- **Use imagery.** Visualize a relaxing experience from your memory or your imagination, such as a time you felt happy and calm or a place where you go to find peace, e.g. the beach, a garden.
- **Try non-strenuous, slow exercises.** Yoga, walking, stretching and similar activities can relax your muscles and calm you down. Remember to give yourself enough time to calm down until the anger subsides.

Practice these techniques daily. Eventually, you'll be able to use them automatically when you're in a tense situation. The more you practice, the better you'll get at it.