

## How Breathing Can Reduce Back Pain Part 2

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Did you know that you can dramatically reduce back, neck, shoulder and hip pain by learning how to breathe diaphragmatically, or deeply and easily? One reason for this is that the diaphragm, as one of the largest muscles in the body, has an effect on every other muscle. When it is tight--or when we don't breathe fully and deeply--it causes muscle tension throughout the body. When it is relaxed--and we breathe fully and deeply--it promotes muscle relaxation throughout the body.

### *Why the Diaphragm Influences Our Muscles*

Perhaps you never thought of the diaphragm as a muscle, and never realized how interconnected your muscles are. You can experience this interconnection yourself by performing a simple experiment. First, stand up. Now tighten your abdominal muscles. Can you feel tension coming into other muscles? Where do you feel the tension? Do you notice changes in your neck, shoulders, back or legs? Notice what happens to your breathing as well. Now relax your abdomen and tighten your buttocks. Where do you feel the tension now? Now tighten the muscles of your neck, and notice what other muscles get tight. Finally, hold your breath, and notice how, by stopping breathing and restricting your diaphragm, you tighten muscles throughout your body.

Tension in any major muscle group in your body creates tension elsewhere. This is especially true of the diaphragm. When the diaphragm is tight, and moves only with effort, other muscles in your body will be tight. When the diaphragm is relaxed and moves easily, other muscles will also be relaxed.

### ***How Your Breathing Influences the Diaphragm***

How does this relationship between the diaphragm and other muscles relate to the relationship between your breathing patterns and muscle tension or muscle relaxation? When the diaphragm is properly relaxed, it moves up and down easily and your breath is even, steady, deep, soft and slow. Therefore, when your breath is soft, deep and slow, your muscles will also tend to be relaxed and movement will be easier.

When your diaphragm is not relaxed, your breath becomes uneven, shallow, faster and more labored. Therefore, when your breathing is restricted, your muscles will tend to be tight and movement becomes more difficult

Since tension translates into pain and relaxation into pleasure, what better reason to breathe fully than to free yourself of tension and pain!

### ***What Happens When the Diaphragm Doesn't Relax?***

When we do not breathe diaphragmatically, and our diaphragm is restricted, other muscles take over the job of trying to bring oxygen into the body – a job originally delegated to the diaphragm. These other muscles are typically located in the upper torso, including the chest, neck and jaw. Unfortunately, these tire easily because they are doing work not meant for them. This results in neck, jaw and shoulder and upper back tension and pain, and in headaches. Moreover, because the diaphragm stays contracted instead of moving up and down, this creates tension in the pelvic muscles, resulting in low back and hip pain. And because the knees depend on flexibility of the hips and low back to function properly, restricted breathing can also result in knee problems.

### ***Breathe Diaphragmatically, or Into Your Belly***

People who don't breathe diaphragmatically or deeply tend to be thoracic or *chest breathers*. Their chests move up and down as they breathe, while the abdomen stays uninvolved. People who suffer from chronic pain frequently are chest breathers.

People who breathe diaphragmatically are *belly breathers*. Their bellies move in and out with the breath. Their chests stay relatively quiet. Your goal should be to become a belly breather. If you can learn to breathe in a relaxed, deep way, or diaphragmatically, you will greatly reduce your pain and increase your sense of ease.

For further free information on how to reduce pain and empower your own physical healing, look at this website's other free articles and check into [www.ingridbacci.com](http://www.ingridbacci.com) on a regular basis for new articles. For systematic guidance and help in your journey, explore the books, CDs and MP3 downloads available through the website, and check for upcoming seminars.

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