

The background of the slide is a light green color with a pattern of various shades of green leaves and branches, some of which are slightly out of focus, creating a natural, organic feel. A large, semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered on the slide, containing the main title and subtitle in black text.

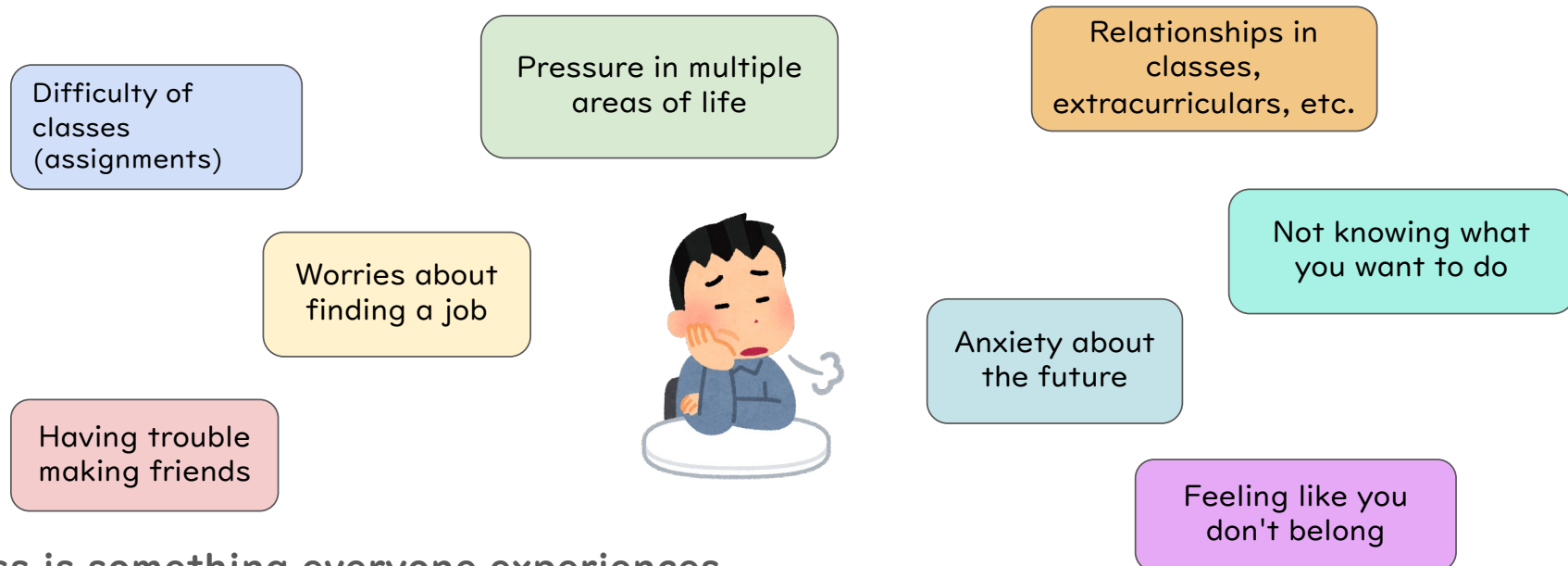
# **Learning about Stress Management**

## **How to Deal with Stress**

**Student Counseling Room**

# Stress for College Students

Students can encounter various stressors during their time at university.



Stress is something everyone experiences.

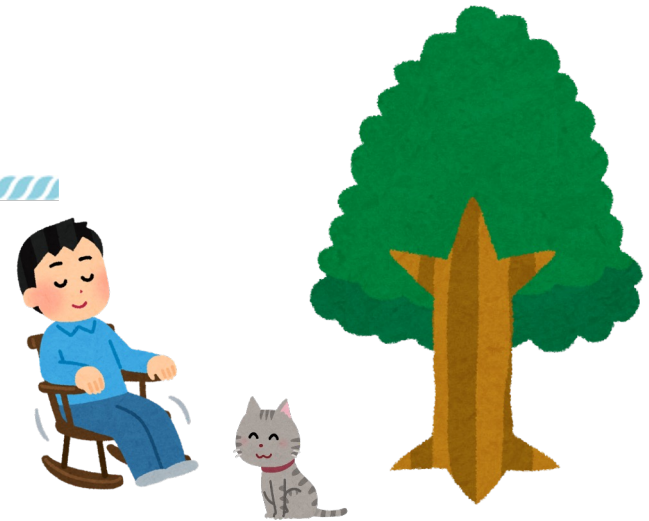
Pushing yourself while stressed can destabilize your life, potentially harming your physical and mental well-being.

# Stress for College Students

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There is no way to eliminate stress completely.

This is why it is important to learn how to effectively deal with stress.



Learn to notice stress early and find ways to manage it that work for you.

Coping with stress is essential for a positive and fulfilling university experience.

Learning how to perform self-care and manage your stress are skills that will also serve you after graduation as you enter the workforce.



# Look for Your Stress Symptoms!

Signs of stress will exhibit in our minds, bodies, and behavior.

I can't fall asleep, I wake up at the drop of a hat, and I don't feel rested.



My head hurts and feels heavy.



I'm irritated a lot and get angry easily.



Are you experiencing any of these emotional or physical symptoms that seem to be out of the ordinary?

Simply experiencing these symptoms does not automatically mean you have a mental illness. However, if left unnoticed and untreated, prolonged stress can lead to further health problems.

It is important to recognize early on when you are experiencing these symptoms so that you can take care of yourself.

# Have You Experienced These Recently?

## Physical Symptoms

Stiff Shoulders

Headaches

Abdominal Pain

Weight Fluctuations

Dizziness

Hyperventilation

Hives

Etc.



These physical symptoms may also indicate an illness that requires medical treatment. If you experience severe or prolonged symptoms, please seek out medical attention.

## Psychological Symptoms

Depression

Racing or Disorganized Thoughts

Loneliness

Anxiety

Irritability

Lethargy

Etc.



## Behavioral Symptoms

Difficulty Sleeping

Fighting or Aggressive Behavior

Inability to Concentrate

Tendency to Self-Isolate

Changes in Daily Habits or Routines



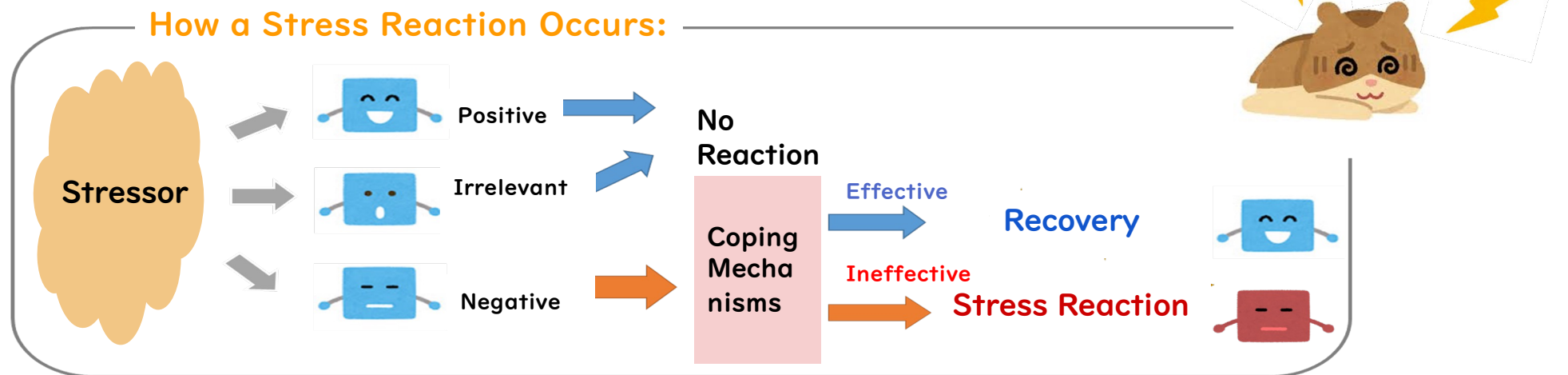
If these types of feelings or behavior are different to what you normally experience, they may feel incredibly overwhelming.

# What Is Stress?

To take things back to basics: what is stress?

Stress refers to a state of tension (stress reaction) in response to external stimuli or internal changes (stressors).

However, not all stressors result in a stress reaction.



It is possible to avoid a stress reaction when a stressor is perceived as positive, irrelevant, or harmless, or when appropriate coping mechanisms are used to confront a negative (stressful) situation.



# What Are Common Stressors?

**Environmental factors:** weather, noise, etc.

**Physical factors:** illness, lack of sleep, etc.

**Psychological factors:** anxiety, overthinking, etc.

**Social factors:** Difficulty forming and maintaining personal relationships, busy work schedule, etc.

There are many external and internal changes that happen during our daily lives that can be stressors.

There are also times when things that are considered positive can actually become a source of stress (e.g., getting into an academic program, getting a job, getting a promotion, getting married, having children, etc.).

## Variations in Stress Reactions (High-Risk Individuals)

### Examples:

- Heightened sensitivity to sounds, smells, taste, or touch
- Heightened sensitivity to physical pain or discomfort
- Prone to anxiety, worry, or overthinking
- Difficulty with social or interpersonal interactions

Identify the stressors that affect you most and find coping mechanisms that work for you.

**\*Sleep deprivation and long working hours (workload at a job) over prolonged periods of time will have a negative impact on **anyone's** health. Making sure to balance your workload and get enough sleep.**

# Coping Mechanisms

**Coping mechanisms** are strategies you can use to protect yourself and reduce the impact of a stress reaction when a stressor triggers a negative response.

1. Choose coping mechanisms that fit the situation at hand
2. Use multiple coping mechanisms as the situation demands

If you use **unhealthy coping mechanisms** that don't work for you or the stressful situation continues for too long, this can actually cause a stress reaction instead of preventing one.

"I'm going to take a break and clear my head."

"I'm going to ask someone for help."

"I'm going to try to look at this from another angle."



It will be easier to cope with stress in your life if you know which mechanisms work for you personally in different types of situations.



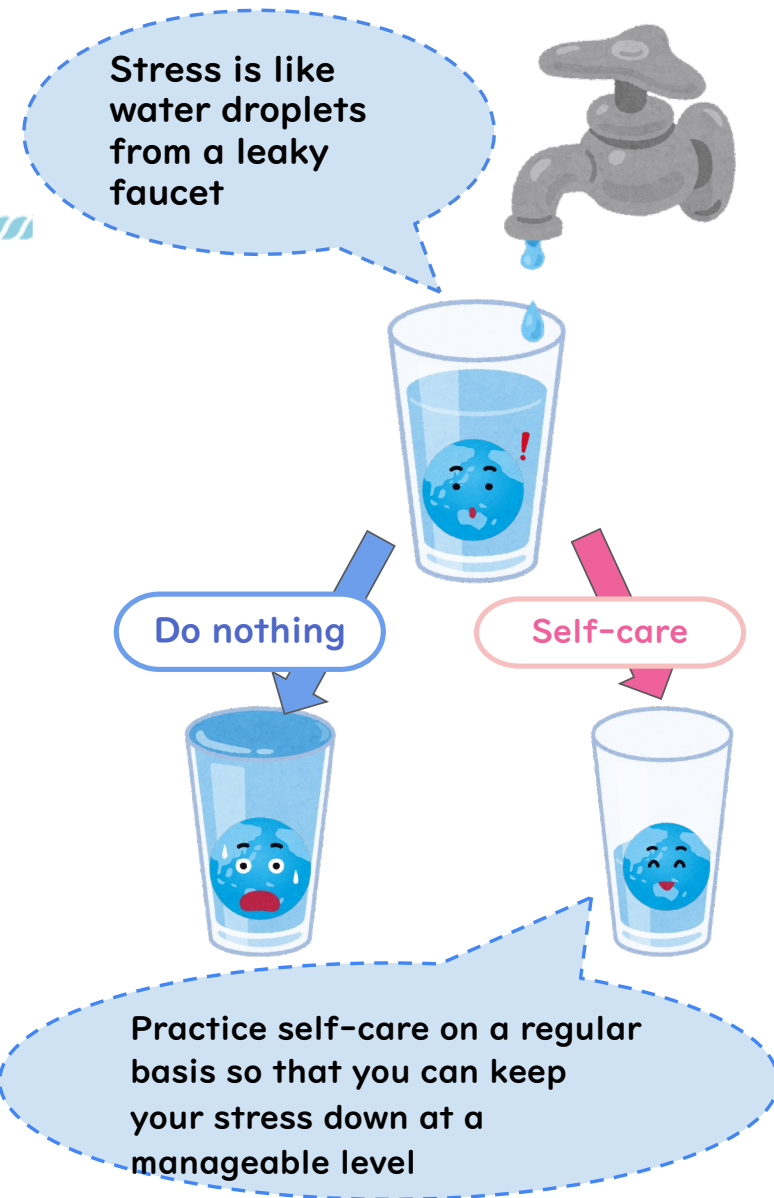
# Dealing Well with Stress

While recognizing stress and using coping mechanisms to address it is the best way of approaching things, it's very common for people to be unaware of underlying stress in the first place.

This is why it's important to practice **self-care** on a regular basis as a way of preventing small stressors from accumulating into something unmanageable.

**Self-care** can involve both emotional help and physical help.

Likewise, there are many times we practice self-care through our connections with other people.

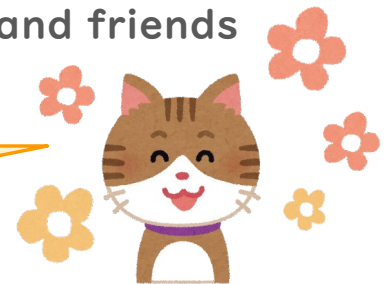


# What Does Self-Care Look Like?

## Examples of self-care:

- ☐ Find a time or place where you can relax
- ☐ Say no to invitations from friends when you are overly exhausted
- ☐ Exercise when possible
- ☐ Try to spend time with people you care about
- ☐ Limit time spent on social media
- ☐ Eat food that is healthy and that you enjoy
- ☐ Recognize and express your feelings (by putting them into words whether written or spoken)
- ☐ Ask for help when you are in trouble (have someone to talk to)
- ☐ Have hobbies, things, and people that you enjoy
- ☐ Try to maintain a regular routine
- ☐ Stay in touch with family and friends

Self-care means making a habit of treating yourself well so that you can be at your best.





# Keeping Stress in Check – Good Habits for Everyday Life –

# Stick to a Structured and Healthy Routine



Between classes (assignments), extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, hanging out with friends, and other obligations, things can get busy. It can be easy to lose sight of healthy boundaries.

When thinking of it as a form of **immunity** against stress-related diseases, though, creating a **structured and healthy routine** becomes a clear priority.

Outline of a “Structured and Healthy Lifestyle.”

## 1. At least six hours of sleep per night

If you make sure to get adequate sleep, you will be able to reduce and deal with stress even when things would otherwise be overwhelming.

While sleeping less might feel like the only option at times, this is when you need to guarantee a good night's rest the most.

## 2. One to two hours of light exercise per week

Running, swimming, or other aerobic exercise can be very effective, but even light exercise such as regular walks or yoga can improve and enhance your mood.

Lifting weights and strength-building exercises are also great alternatives to aerobic exercise, so find a routine that works for you.

## 3. Eating three balanced meals

Eating breakfast, chewing your food well, and choosing healthy meals are important habits for maintaining good mental health.



# Having a Flexible Mindset:

## Look at Things from Other Perspectives



Each and every one of us has thought patterns (automatic thoughts) that are instantaneous, habitual, and nonconscious when we encounter situations.

For instance, when a professor appears unhappy, some students may wonder, “Did I make them angry somehow?” (an automatic thought) and feel **uneasy**, **depressed**, or **afraid** as a result. If these automatic thoughts are associated with negative emotions, it can lead to us feeling stress.

When this happens (in the example of the unhappy professor), it may be helpful to purposefully explore alternative ideas and ask whether your thoughts are based on facts.

(Examples)

-If my friend was experiencing this, what would I say to help them?

-What facts support this idea?

“Is it possible my professor is simply feeling unwell?”

“Did I do anything that would have upset them?”

“Come to think of it, they mentioned that they went to see a doctor recently!”

Changing the way you interpret the situation can help lower your stress levels.

Sometimes all it takes to feel better is a new perspective.



# Respectful Communication for Yourself and Others



One important communication skill is "assertiveness". Simply put, assertiveness is a form of self-expression that places value on both the speaker and listener.

**Assertive communication** is based on the premise that every person has the right to express their intentions and needs.

Out of the three communication styles below, which is closest to how you interact with people?

**Passive communication:** Holding back or failing to express your thoughts and feelings

"If only I could try harder..."

**Aggressive communication:** Ignoring or dismissing others' thoughts or emotions and insisting on your own interpretation

"I *am* very assertive, but no one listens to me!"

**Assertive communication:** Expressing your thoughts and feelings clearly in a manner appropriate to the setting and encouraging others to do the same

"I am doing okay. Are you?"

Depending on who you are talking to or the situation, you may change your communication style.



For instance, some people may default to a passive communication style when talking to their parents, authority figures, or older people, but be aggressive and domineering when dealing with friends, family, or younger work colleagues.

Likewise, some people may normally be good at using assertive communication but be passive in classes or aggressive in extracurricular settings or at home. No matter the pattern, the first step is to recognize if there are certain people or situations in which you struggle to be assertive.

Being aware of your passive or aggressive behavioral tendencies can make it much easier to find chances to change.



# When You're Struggling, Talk to Someone

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Talking to people is a well-known way of reducing stress.

But why is it that opening up and sharing with someone helps our stress and problems?

In many cases, we don't really understand why our stress or problems hurt so much, or what we should do about them. Confiding in others about anything, even small things, or talking about your feelings (even if you're just complaining) allows you to see things more objectively and can help you sort through all of the thoughts and feelings swirling around in your head.

By talking to someone, you may realize what is causing you stress and what bigger things you're worried about.

Once you start to understand your stress and struggles, you can come up with solutions that work for you.

Still, it's important to choose carefully who you open up to.

Think of the people you spend time with.

Is there someone who will listen to you, someone you can trust?

It can be very beneficial to find people in your life, whether friends, colleagues, close family, relatives, or teachers, who you can talk to about everyday things.

When you don't know who to talk to, you're always welcome to come to the Student Counseling Room.



# Unwinding the Mind and Body:

## Benefits of Relaxation



As the body relaxes, the mind also relaxes.

Developing daily relaxation habits that work for you can help you build a stress-resilient mind and body.

- Muscle Relaxation
- Listening to Music
- Breathing Techniques
- Stretching
- Light Massages

**Muscle relaxation:** Release tension by consciously tightening and then relaxing different parts of your body, one at a time.

**Breathing techniques:** Doing belly breathing (diaphragmatic breathing) can help regulate the autonomic nervous system.

These are all easy to incorporate into your life. By knowing these techniques, you can use them when you want to relieve tension, such as before a presentation or interview!





# Do You Know about the Student Counseling Room?

## Open:

The staff are happy to speak with you about anything on your mind.

Depending on what you are going through, they can help connect with you with other resources.


## Voluntary:

The Student Counseling Room is completely voluntary and up to you about whether you visit.

## Confidential:

Anything you share will be kept private.

## Consultation topic examples:

- ❖ Interpersonal relationships
  - ❖ Physical or mental health
  - ❖ Graduation or future career paths
  - ❖ Family situations
  - ❖ Questions about your inner-life or identity
  - ❖ Financial problems
  - ❖ Extracurricular activities
- 

# Student Counseling Room



## Mita Campus B1F, South School Building,

2-15-45 Mita, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 108-8345

Tel: **03-5427-1575**

Open: Monday to Friday/9:30AM-4:30PM

English is available: Monday, Wednesday,  
Friday

## Yagami Campus Room 101, 1F, 26th Building,

3-14-1 Hiyoshi, Kohoku-ku, Yokohama,  
Kanagawa 223-8522

Tel: **045-566-1431**

Open: Monday to Friday/10:00AM-5:00PM

English is available: Monday, Thursday

## Hiyoshi Campus 1F, 4th Bldg., Independent Wing (Dokuritsukan)

4-1-1 Hiyoshi, Kohoku-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa 223-8521

Tel: **045-566-1027**

Open: Monday to Friday/9:30AM-4:30PM

English is available: Tuesday, Wednesday,  
Thursday, Friday

Depending on the  
day, we may be able  
to offer counseling  
services in English!

Keio students may go  
to any of the Student  
Counseling Rooms,  
regardless of their  
regular campus.



The Student Counseling Room offers counseling and consultation in person, by telephone, and online.\*Our services are by appointment only as a general rule. You can reserve a spot by visiting or calling during office hours.

For the most current information, please refer to the Student Counseling Room's website.

<https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/com/life/consult/counseling-room.html>





## Reference sites:

National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry : Mental Health Information Website

<https://kokoro.ncnp.go.jp/>

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: Stress and Wellness, Maintaining Mental Health (Mental Health Site Supporting Young People)

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/kokoro/youth/stress/index.html>

Keio University Health Center: Quick Guide to Coping Mechanisms

Keio University Student Counseling Room: Navigating Your Current Stress and Anxiety

Part 1: Explanation

[https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/com/life/consult/files/for\\_students\\_part1.pdf](https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/com/life/consult/files/for_students_part1.pdf)

Part 2: Self-care

[https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/com/life/consult/files/for\\_students\\_part2.pdf](https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/com/life/consult/files/for_students_part2.pdf)

Part 3: Social Communication

[https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/com/life/consult/files/for\\_students\\_part3.pdf](https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/com/life/consult/files/for_students_part3.pdf)





# References

- Noriko Hiraki, *An Illustrated Guide for Techniques to Communicate Your Feelings Effectively: Recommendations for Self-Counseling to Make Interpersonal Relationships Easier to Navigate* (Published by the PHP Institute)
- Hiroaki Kumano & Emi Ito, *Protecting Your Heart and Mind from Killer Stress: Mindfulness and Coping Skills Workbook with CD* (Published by the Shufu To Seikatsu Sha Company)
- Emi Ito, *Self-Care Toolbox: 100 Exercises for Dealing with Stress* (Published by Shobunsha)





# Handout: Relaxation Techniques

## Muscle Relaxation:



1. Close your eyes.
2. Slowly raise both shoulders so that they are touching your ears.
3. When you have lifted your shoulders as high as they'll go, relax and let them drop.
4. Repeat the process several times.



### Main Points

- Take a moment to really feel relaxed.
- After letting go of the tension, don't move on to the next thing. Take a moment to feel how your body is relaxing.
- Let yourself feel the warmth spread in your shoulders.

## Breathing Techniques



1. Sit and relax in a chair.
2. Place a hand on your stomach and inhale slowly through your nose.
3. After you have finished breathing in, exhale slowly through your mouth.
4. Repeat this process several times.



### Main Points

- It's okay to breathe at a pace you find comfortable.
- Try to make your stomach expand when you inhale and contract when you exhale. (Belly breathing)
- Spend longer on exhaling than you usually would.
- Picture yourself blowing lightly on a candle flame while exhaling. Try to make the flame flicker, but not go out.