

## **Check your breathing**

### *(5-minute exercise)*

Our breath is our life energy. Shallow breathing reduces its power and is often associated with feelings like nervousness, tension, or anxiety. Shallow breathing also goes hand in hand with heightened feelings of stress.

When we take a deep breath, our lungs expand. This tells our heart that it doesn't need to beat so fast, and it quickly creates a feeling of relaxation.

#### **The exercise:**

- Spend some time getting familiar with your breathing. Try to observe how you're breathing at the moment, without making any judgements. Are you breathing superficially, deeply, calmly, gently, abruptly, irregularly, or regularly? Most likely, you'll also notice something about your current emotional state too when you focus in on your breathing. If you keep doing this for a couple of minutes, it'll also become easier for you to regulate your feelings of being unsettled in the long term and complete your tasks in a more relaxed manner.
- This can be a great starting point for change. If you regularly set aside some time (5 minutes each day are enough, or initially only a couple of times a week) for observing your breath, you'll feel more energized, relaxed, and positive in the long run. This is a very easy technique for regulating your stress and your emotional responses in demanding times.

#### *Source & further reading:*

Collard, Patrizia: Das kleine Buch vom achtsamen Leben. *Wilhelm Heyne Verlag*. München, 2014.