Relaxation: Relieving the body and mind from effort/work

Deep Breathing: Utilizing the diaphragm to create strong breaths which activates the parasympathetic nervous system (AKA the relaxation system of the body)

Benefits:

- Relieves physical muscle tension
- Allows the mental function to slow and relax
- Body and mind connection
- Calms and centers
- Activates parasympathetic nervous system
- Releases natural wastes, such as carbon dioxide
- Gives the internal organs a gentle massage
- Increases the oxygen to all cells
- Strengthens the lungs
- Slows your heart rate
- Lowers your blood pressure
- Increases blood flow to muscles
- Improves concentration
- Reduces anger and frustration
- Boosts confidence

(Mayo Clinic Staff, 2011.)

How Diaphragmatic Breathing Works:

Inhale: Diaphragm drops, the rib cage moves out, and air rushes into the vacuum created.

Exhale: Diaphragm pushes up, the rib cage moves in, and air pushes out.
Simple Breathing Practices

3 Part Diaphragmatic Breath (SYTTM, 2008.): This technique consists of 1 inhale and 1 exhale, but each of the inspirations and expirations have 3 parts to it. Move through the process slowly to get familiar with it, then start with about 10-15 breaths. Work your way up to 20 -25.

**INHALE:**
1. Breathe in through your nose and fill up your belly like a balloon
2. Fill the rib cage; feel each and every space in-between the ribs become wider
3. Finish by filling up the upper chest

**EXHALE:**
1. Release through your nose from your chest
2. Feel the rib cage become tighter and the spaces in-between the ribs become smaller
3. Use your abdominal muscles to push out the stagnant air at the bottom of your belly

Pure Breath Technique (SYTTM, 2008.): This breathing technique is done in the following order to produce a calm breath and mind.

1. Smooth – Start to slow down the breath, allow it to become soft without any jerk or pauses
2. Even – same number of counts in and same number of counts out
3. Interconnect – Create an easy transition between the inhaled and exhaled; just as if the breath were a Ferris Wheel, as you inhale the breath rides up and as you shift you naturally fall into the exhale and ride the Ferris Wheel down

References:

Mayo Clinic Staff. Stress Management; Relaxation Techniques. August 2011.
http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/relaxation-technique/SR00007