

PELVIC FLOOR AND DIASTASIS

6 PART COURSE

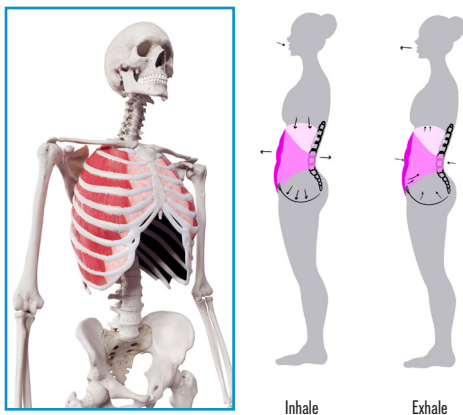
Part 2

Breathing Exercises

We all have different causes for tightness, restrictions, or ingrained patterns. Air and pressure follow the path of least resistance.

Use breathing drills to:

- Help open the path of most resistance.
- Improve intercostal strength to aid with rib cage mobility and decrease overusing the abs, which in turn reduces pressure down on the pelvic floor.



Side-Lying Breathing



Focus on single-sided rib cage movement and diaphragm expansion.

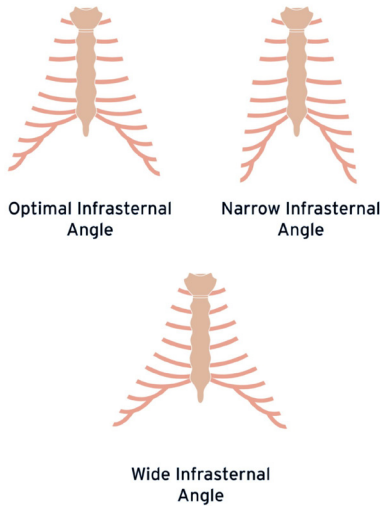
- Lie on your side with your head resting on a pillow or towel roll and your shoulder directly underneath you.

- Curl into a slight ball with your knees at hip height and pelvis slightly tucked under. Your spine should be in a slight C shape.
- Use your abs on the bottom side to keep that side lifted off of the floor.
- Place your fingers under your rib cage on the top side with your thumb wrapped around the back.
- Inhale, and feel the expansion in your top ribs and diaphragm as your hand gets pushed out.
- Exhale completely, feeling your top side rib cage move down and in.
- As you exhale, you can gently push your top side ribs in with your hand (using a “ha” breath is best) to help them come down. This can also help set you up for an even better inhale.
- You can either lift your hand for the next big inhale that fills everywhere, or keep some pressure with your hand to get more air to go into your back.
- Watch for shallow breathing, making sure that your shoulder and neck don’t move up on the inhale.

Troubleshooting tips

- If you’re having a hard time keeping your bottom side abs lifted, use a towel roll or pillow under the ribs on that side to assist.
- If you feel all the air going into your belly, curl into more of a ball or use a pillow between your thighs and belly, making the path of least resistance your back and sides instead of your belly.
- Check out the [Rib Cage Smash](#) to help with some rib mobility before trying this exercise.

“Ha” Breathing



- Great for a narrow infrasternal angle (ISA).
 - Improves rib cage movement with increased use of the intercostals over the external obliques.
 - Good for the pelvic floor because overusing the external obliques can contribute to too much pressure down on your pelvic floor.
 - Great for a wide ISA.
 - Gets the ribs moving fully in to narrow the infrasternal angle.
 - Great for a diastasis to decrease pressure out through the midline without putting too much pressure down on the pelvic floor.
- **Be sure to use caution with overpressure if someone is new to exercise, pregnant, or has osteoporosis.**



Sit on a chair or on the floor.

- Completely relax your belly and slouch just a bit to gently round your back.
- Place your hands on your rib cage with your thumbs wrapping around the back.
- Inhale and feel the expansion in your back and rib cage, making sure your abs let go.
- Exhale with a very gentle, open-mouthed “ha” breath. Use your hands to encourage the ribs to move in and down. Your belly stays fully relaxed so that no pressure goes down into the pelvic floor.
- Keeping some pressure in your front lower ribs with your hands, inhale into your thumbs.
- Exhale with a “ha” breath again, taking up the slack in your ribs a bit more with your abs staying completely relaxed.
- Inhale and hold the new rib position as you feel the side of your hand and thumbs being pushed out.
- Try it 3-5 times. Do this throughout the day. It may take a lot of practice!
- Make sure to get full, complete inhales and exhales, but without straining. A nice, full exhale should help make the inhale feel even better.

Tips

- **Narrow ISA:** Stop before you get any abdominal engagement.
- **Wide ISA:** If not feeling pressure down on the pelvic floor, add an abdominal contraction to the very end of the exhale, emptying from the bottom up.
- Monitor for shallow breathing, watching that your shoulders don't lift up and your neck doesn't feel tense.

Notes