



# **TRUCKER** **SERVICE** **ASSOCIATION**

 **LIVE HEALTHY  
DRIVER HEALTH** 

## **"UP-REGULATED & STRESSED"**

**July 2022**

**KUHFLEFIT**  
RENEW YOUR VITALITY



# COMMON SCENARIO

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You wake up late for your early morning haul across the country carrying precious cargo. There's no time for breakfast, so you make a quick stop at the nearest truck stop to snag a donut and coffee where it spills and burns your hand. It's raining and windy with gusts that blow you left and right on the road. The morning started off "on the wrong side of the bed". A situation like this is not uncommon, and can leave even the most experienced driver up-regulated and stressed-out to a large degree. This up-regulation and stress causes a cascade of deleterious effects within the body and on the mind. You may see this play out as irritability, road rage, cussing, or even aggressive driving when it's unnecessary.

## UP-REGULATION

When these states of stress start, what typically follows is the BREATH getting "stuck" in the chest. When we are calm, our breath should fill the belly first, then the chest all-the-while slowly entering and exiting our bodies. When we're stressed, we start to breathe more shallow and quickly where most of the breath, if not all, resides solely in the chest. This trapped breath that struggles to descend into the abdominal region signals to the body it's in its "fight or flight" mode that only continues to exacerbate the stress cycle. Awareness is KEY! Noticing what it feels like when you're breathing from your chest and correcting it can be the SIMPLEST thing one can do to optimize their health. Breathing well lowers stress levels which has a profound effect on mood, blood pressure, and even weight loss.

# WHAT TO DO?

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What is imperative in the countless situations that can leave you up-regulated is to first become aware, as previously mentioned. Harnessing control over your breath is something you can do immediately to reduce stress in the moment.

—→ A wise man once said, "If you can control your breath, you can control your state."

Start by closing your mouth and breathing strictly through the nose. The breath through the nose helps activate a different part of your nervous system that helps down-regulate, calm, and relax the individual at hand. This down regulating allows clearer thoughts, decreased stress, better mental clarity, and even lowers blood pressure.

From there, slowly direct the breath from the nose deep, filling the stomach prior to the chest rising. Place a hand on your stomach and on your chest to see which is moving first if you're having a hard time feeling where your breath is going. You want your hand on your stomach to move first. Within a few breaths, you can start to notice an IMMEDIATE change within your physiology.

Many clients explain how they can start to feel their body relax, their shoulders loosen up, headaches go away, and they feel more at-peace. The tension throughout the body starts to dissipate and the ability to take larger and longer diaphragmatic breaths (breaths from your abdominal region) become much easier after only a handful of breaths.

# HOW TO START THIS PRACTICE

The KEY is LOW & SLOW!

The breath of exhalation is the breath of relaxation!

Here are 3 ways one can change their breath now and start noticing the effects of this right away. Choose 1 today and try the other 2 over the next two days to find which one works best for you.

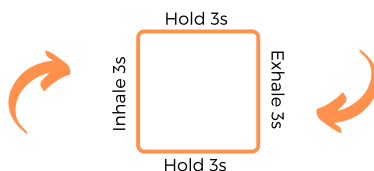
## Long Exhales

1. Inhale through the nose and count how many seconds it takes. Allow the exhale to be twice as long; i.e. 3 second inhale followed by a 6 second exhale



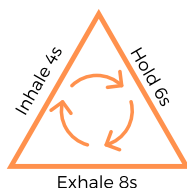
## Box breathing.

1. Inhale for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, exhale for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds. Repeat.



## 4-6-8 Breathing

1. Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 6 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds





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