

Assessing Your Breathing Pattern, Rate, and Depth (see video)

Proper breathing is crucial for our health, impacting both physical and mental well-being. To assess and improve your breathing, start by finding a comfortable position with your back straight and shoulders relaxed. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen to observe your breath. Proper breathing, characterized by diaphragmatic or belly breathing, will cause the hand on your abdomen to rise more than the one on your chest.

Next, assess your breathing rate by counting your breaths for one minute. A normal resting breathing rate for adults is 12-16 breaths per minute, while a more relaxed and efficient rate is typically between **6-10 breaths per minute**.

To evaluate breathing depth, take a deep breath in through your nose, filling your lungs completely, and observe the movement in your abdomen. Additionally, use the BOLT score to assess breathing efficiency and respiratory health. Sit comfortably, breathe normally, then pinch your nose shut after exhaling and time how long you can hold your breath until the first strong desire to breathe. A score of **25 seconds or more indicates good breathing efficiency**, 15-25 seconds suggests room for improvement, and less than 15 seconds indicates suboptimal breathing patterns and the need for breathing exercises.