

# Breathing

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There are certain times in life, when breathing becomes different to the norm. In an emotional crisis or stressful situation you have probably been aware that your breathing pattern changes. In other words the breath reflects the mood or state that you are experiencing. As your emotional state influences your breathing, so can your breathing affect your emotional state. You can control the breathing given that you understand that your emotional state can be changed by regulating this.

When you are relaxed your breathing is slow , rhythmical and quiet. When asleep it becomes deep and forceful but when under stress breathing can become rapid and shallow. When angry your breathing can become quite irregular. Therefore panic and stress can be controlled by by changing your breathing pattern. Certain breathing techniques can be learnt to stop stress and anger from harming your body.

Regular breathing exercises especially when practised first thing in the morning in the open fresh air can invigorate the mind and body. The Chinese and Japanese practise this art daily so that everyone can function at their optimum. The Chinese perform many Tai Chi routines that have the breath as a most important part of this discipline. The following exercises are taken from their knowledge of the role of breathing and I have tried to change them into simpler terms so that we can all manage them every day.

## Stress Strategy.

When are you under stress ? At work when your boss is asking for more than you can manage? At home when the kids are demanding more of you than you can give? When shopping and there is no time to waste and there is a huge queue? When you have to get home from work because early as your wife has asked friends to a special dinner party and you are stuck in a traffic jam? Need I go on. All these times and many more will start your pulse racing, the frustration builds to anger and the tension and anxiety builds.

This simple breathing exercise works at replacing the tension with serene calm. Sit comfortably in a chair, let your shoulders drop and widen, let your head lift upward from your shoulders as if being lifted from above. Look straight ahead and fix your gaze on a place dead ahead. Practice this initial letting go. Do not force it to be comfortable. It may take time to achieve this, but practice makes perfect. Nothing was achieved in 5 minutes.

When you can do this with ease, your lungs will be free to fill from the bottom to the top. Start by taking a few slow but gentle breaths. Breath in freely to a count of 3 and then let the breath out again to a count of 3. Let the chest expand and deflate as you breath in and out. Do not force the breath. You are now beginning to 'calm' the breath. In this way you can quieten the nervous system, control the stress and get your body and mind back in balance. Once you have worked out the knack of doing this, you will be able to do it anywhere, even in a traffic jam, providing you are stationary. This is very simple but most effective.

## Breathing Exercises to Reduce Tension.

Tension often shows in the neck and shoulders. When you feel this tension there is a simple exercise that you can do to reduce pain and stiffness. It can be done at work or at home, indeed at any time. If needs be you can do this several times a day when feeling tense or under pressure.

Stand up, stretch your arms high above your head and then let them fall loosely to your sides. Push your shoulders back

and hold your stomach muscles in, tuck your bottom under, let your head rise and your shoulders drop, thus encouraging blood flow. Take a slow breath in counting 1-2-3-4 and then release the breath to a slow count of 1-2-3-4. At the same time allow your shoulders to drop further. Now make a circle with your head and let it drop onto your chest., roll the head over the left shoulder to drop further behind you and roll over the right shoulder and back onto the chest. Roll the head 3 times to the left then 3 times to the right breathing easily all the time. Finally lift the head take a deep steady breath and you will feel less tired and less tense.

Regular Daily Breathing exercises- To be done outside in the fresh air.

Refreshing Breathing.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Take a deep breath in through your nose at the same time rise onto your toes, lift your arms above your head and fully stretch you arms and fingers reaching upwards as you do so. Let your breath out in one fast puff and at the same time come off your toes

and band at the waist until you end up bending forward almost touching the ground. Do this exercise 3 times.

Exercise to Help Sore Throats - Balancing breathing.

Do this exercise especially if you have a cold or sore throat. Stand with feet shoulder width apart and breathe in through your nose, whilst clenching your fists at the same time bringing them up to shoulder height knuckles upward, elbows pointing to the sides. As you breath out slowly through your mouth, open your fists push your palms forward and fingers upward. Time it so that the breath runs out as the arms reach full stretch, then breathe in through your nose, clench your fists and bend your elbows so that they are again near the shoulders, elbows out. Repeat this exercise 6 times and on the last breath let your arms come in and gently float down to your sides.

Breathing Exercise to Energise.

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Bend knees slightly. Breathe in through the nose and at the same time bring hands to shoulder height, palms facing forward , right hand by right shoulder and left hand by left shoulder. Breathe out through the mouth very slowly and at the same time push the palms and arms forward. Imagine you are pushing against a heavy weight. Breathe in through the nose and draw the hands back towards the shoulders. Now as you breathe out again through the mouth, push the palms to the side at shoulder height, imagine you are parting 2 walls. Again as you breathe out push your palms above your head and breathe in once more. Bring your palms back to shoulder height, turn palms to face down and then as you breathe out push the palms down and then let them rest at your sides. Take 3 breaths and them repeat the whole thing 3 times.

Exercises For Specific Organs.

Exercising our muscular body is part of our everyday normal life, but exercising our internal organs helps aid digestion and elimination whilst invigorating our internal function.

Stomach.

This exercise aids digestion.

Stand with feet together and place your left hand on your stomach. Lift your right hand to shoulder height, elbow and arm to right side, palm facing in front of you. Breathe in through your nose and then out slowly through your mouth. At the same time push your right palm out in front of you. Time the outward motion with the outward breath. Breathe in through

your nose and draw your right hand back to its starting position.

Start this exercise off at 3 times increasing during the next 3 weeks to 6 times. When finished place your right hand on your stomach and your left hand on top of your right hand. Do 3 in and out breaths.

#### Liver.

Standing with heels together, breathe in through your nose and rise up on your toes. Turn your head to the right as you breathe out slowly through your mouth. Lower your heels and turn your head to face forwards. Repeat turning head to the left. Do this exercise 3 times to each side and increase gradually.

#### Kidneys.

Stand with feet just over shoulder width apart, knees bent. Place palms together, left hand on the top with fingers facing in opposite directions. Place the hands level with the abdomen about 9" in front of you. Now reverse the position by rotating the hands but keeping them touching. Keep repeating this motion up to 20 times, each time you change turn just your head to look first right, then left. Press hard on the palms, which creates heat. When you have done the 20 times, direct this heat over the kidney by placing your right hand on your right kidney area and your left hand on the left kidney area. Hold position for one minute and feel the warmth from your hands and then release. Relax for a minute or so.

#### Lungs.

As well as being for the lungs it also helps with cold relief and blocked energies. Lie on your back, arms by your side, legs lying out straight and relaxed. Take a long In breath through your nose, as you do so take your arms up and then rest them down on the floor above your head. Now make a very loud Aces sound and continue the sound slowly until you run out of breath. At the same time let your hands lift up and in a semi-circular motion come down to your sides. Repeat 3 times. This is called the S Breath.

#### Breathing Exercises To Help Sleep.

This exercise is helpful for those minds that will not turn off after the days events. Go to bed, close your eyes and make yourself comfortable, breathe in and out deeply, deepening your breath as you exhale. Try and visualise your breath moving up from the diaphragm to your lungs and out of your mouth. In your mind think of the air as the arc of a rainbow from your mouth back to your stomach and through an imaginary hole to your diaphragm and then up through your diaphragm, lungs and out of your mouth. Start all over again with a slow deep rhythmic breathing counting 1-2-3-4 as you breath in and 1-2-3-4- as you breath out, visualising the circle of air, keep your mind fully concentrated on this circle of air and you will find sleep gently encircles you.