



Patient Handout

Breathing Exercises

The Alternate Nostril Breath

Benefits:

- The Alternate Nostril Breath -
 - o Has a marvelously calming effect on the nervous system.
 - o Helps to overcome insomnia.
 - o Relaxes and refreshes the body.
 - o Purifies the bloodstream and aerates the lungs.
 - o Soothes headaches.
 - o Improves digestion and appetite.
 - o Helps to free the mind of anxiety and depression.

Technique:

1. Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position with your back straight.
2. Raise your RIGHT hand and place your ring finger against your LEFT nostril, closing it off.
3. Inhale deeply and slowly through the RIGHT nostril to the count of four.
4. Close off the RIGHT nostril with your thumb and hold the breath for a count of one to four.
5. Open the LEFT nostril and exhale to the count of four to eight. The longer you can make the exhalation, the better. Concentrate on completely emptying the lungs.
6. Breathe in through that same LEFT nostril to the count of four.
7. Close off the nostril with the ring finger again and hold to the count of one to four. Exhale through the RIGHT nostril to the count of four to eight. This makes up one round.
8. Repeat these rounds of alternate nostril breathing five more times, or for up 10 minutes if you are concerned about insomnia.

Practice a breath count ratio of 4:4:8, if at all possible. Increase this to 8:4:8 eventually, then 8:8:8, after some months.

Do's and Don'ts:

- DO practice the Alternate Nostril Breath whenever you need calming – if you are nervous, upset or irritable.
- DON'T push yourself with the holding position or by increasing the ratio until you are comfortable doing so.
- DON'T make the breathing rhythmic, instead it should be smooth and slow. You can work on making it inaudible eventually.
- The importance of this particular breath cannot be over-emphasized. The body and mind are closely interrelated and one influences the other to a much greater extent than medicine admitted to for many years. As an all-around “soother”, the alternate nostril breath is incomparable.

The Complete Breath

Benefits:

- The Complete Breath –
 - o Purifies and enriches the bloodstream.
 - o Develops the chest and diaphragm.
 - o Strengthens lungs, thorax and abdomen.
 - o Increases resistance to colds.
 - o Calms the nervous system.
 - o Aids digestion.
 - o Clears up phlegm.
 - o Helps to lift depression.



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Technique:

1. Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position or in a chair.
2. Straighten your back, which will straighten your thorax for easier breathing.
3. Inhale slowly through the nose, breathing deeply, consciously.
4. Take five seconds to fill the lower part of the lungs, by expanding the ribs and pushing the abdomen out.
5. Concentrate on filling the top of the lungs for the next five seconds. This will expand the chest and tighten the abdomen slightly.
6. Hold the breath for one – five seconds.
7. Exhale slowly until you have emptied the lungs.
8. Repeat four – five times more.

Do's and Don'ts:

- DO establish a rhythmic rise and fall of your abdomen, to promote regular breathing.
- DO attempt to breathe inaudibly after you have gotten the knack of deep breathing.
- DO concentrate on your breathing alone, with your eyes closed, if you wish. It serves to do the technique better but it is also a preparation for meditation.
- DO push your abdomen out as you breathe in and pull the abdomen in as you breathe out.
- DO give an extra snort as you exhale to rid yourself of stale waste-matter in the bottom of the lungs.
- DON'T slump. For maximum efficiency the thorax must be straight.

The Cleansing Breath

Benefits:

The Cleansing Breath –

- Clears lungs, sinuses and nasal passages.
- Relieves colds.
- Tones the nervous system.
- Strengthens the lungs, thorax and abdomen.
- Purifies the bloodstream and clears the head.
- Aids digestion.
- Stimulates the liver, spleen and pancreas.

Technique:

1. Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position or a chair, back straight.
2. Inhale deeply, pushing the abdomen out, and taking in as much air as possible in the space of 1 second.
3. Whack your abdomen forcefully to expel the air through the nostrils. The sensation should be one of having been punched in the stomach.
4. Inhale again by pushing the abdomen out and letting the air rush back into the vacuum created by the exhalation.
5. The whole process, inhalation and exhalation should take not much more than 1-1/2 seconds. Both should be forceful and quite audible.
6. Repeat ten times, follow with a complete breath and repeat ten times more.

Do's and Don'ts:

- DO push the abdomen out as far as you can as you inhale.
- DON'T exhale consciously, but let the action of the abdomen do it for you.



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Breathing Exercises

Cyclic Breath

Benefits:

- The Cyclic Breath -
 - o Calms the nervous system.
 - o Helps to overcome insomnia.
 - o Relaxes and refreshes the body.
 - o Helps to free the mind of anxiety and depression.
 - o Engages the right brain, allowing the body to be in the moment.

Technique:

1. Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
2. Inhale slowly through the nose, breathing deeply, consciously.
3. Ensure your belly fills, rising outward, your diaphragm pulling down.
4. Breathe in for 3 seconds
5. Hold your breath for 3 seconds
6. Release your breathe to a count of 5 seconds.
7. Repeat 5 more times or until you reach 5-10 minutes of breathing.

You may also choose to breathe in for a count of 3 and exhale to a count of 5. This will help further disengage your left brain and help your nervous system calm down.

Do's and Don'ts:

- DO breathe into your belly, ensuring it rises fully and deeply engages the diaphragm
- DON'T exhale consciously, but let the action of the abdomen do it for you.