

Deep Breathing Exercise

The Simplest Form of Oxygen Therapy

So you must be wondering what is there to learn about deep breathing exercise? Breathing is something that you do without thinking about it and you do it all the time. And yet, most of us do not take a deep enough breath to fully oxygenate the body. Following this deep breathing exercise regularly can help you breathe properly all the time.

Take a quick look at people around you – when they breathe, they often suck in their gut and their shoulders will lift up towards their ears. This is a classic example of shallow breathing, not deep breathing. Chances are they don't even realize they are doing it, as they have been breathing this way for years. The majority of people use *only one-third* of their breathing capacity regularly. Have you hear the old saying - use it or lose it?

Here is a simple deep breathing exercise that you can practice. Once you become proficient in it, you can spend two minutes doing it and literally feel stress and tension melt away from your body. It allows your mind to calm down and leaves you feeling relaxed and centered. It is extremely effective at relieving headaches. Following this deep breathing exercise for even two minutes each day will help your body relearn how to breathe deeply on a regular basis.

Don't become discouraged by the number of instructions. The efficacy of this deep breathing exercise depends upon proper posture, proper movement of the body in conjunction with the breath and finally, proper sound. I am being as detailed as possible since I can't see you to determine what point you are starting from. If at all possible, do this deep breathing exercise in front of a mirror or have someone watch you, so you can make sure that you get the full effect of the exercise while you are learning it.

Deep Breathing Exercise Posture:

- 1.** Take a firm pillow or neatly folded blanket and place it on the floor, next to a wall. Sit on the pillow/blanket, so that your back is against the wall. If necessary, press your butt, back and the inside of your shoulder blades against the wall, so that your spine straightens. The small of your back may not touch the wall – that is okay.
- 2.** Next, you need to position your head correctly. Adjust your head so that your chin is parallel to the floor. Now tip your chin down, about one-half inch. If your back is positioned correctly against the wall, you should now feel your spine lengthen even more.
- 3.** Relax your shoulders.
- 4.** This is the proper posture to begin deep breathing exercises. By straightening your spine, you have now created space internally, so your lungs can fully expand.

Proper Deep Breath In:

5. Now place one hand on your abdomen. With your mouth closed, take a deep breath in, and feel your abdomen expand, then release the breath. Your abdomen should expand a good 4-6 inches if you are taking in a full breath.

6. Now place your other hand on your chest and feel the slight expansion that occurs when you take a breath in. The movement in your chest should occur after your abdomen expands. This movement is what happens when your lungs fill from bottom to top with cleansing breath. Make sure that your shoulders stay relaxed and down, away from your ears. If your shoulders move, this is a sign that you are not breathing deeply.

7. When you first try this, have someone watch you and see if your abdomen truly expands. Also have them keep an eye on your shoulders to make sure that you aren't moving them up and down in conjunction with your breath. You may want to have them put gentle pressure on your shoulders to make sure they are truly relaxed. The only movement should be in your torso, caused by the expansion of your lungs to their fullest capacity. We are so conditioned to suck in our guts in order to look our best that often this is the hardest part of the exercise. One of the first things I myself do is to loosen my pants so my abdomen can expand!

8. Take a moment to notice that the small of your back presses against the wall with each breath in. Now that truly is deep breathing!

Proper Deep Breath Out – move to this section only when you are sure you are taking a full breath in:

9. This part is much easier! With your mouth closed, as you exhale, slowly compress your abdomen as if you are trying to internally touch your spine with your belly button. This conscious movement helps your lungs expel all of the air that you have taken in.

Balance Your Deep Breathing Exercise

1. Now try to balance your inhale and your exhale. Think about a ticking clock and time your inhale and exhale – first take four counts to inhale, pause for one count, and take four counts to exhale.

2. Incorporate this cycle into your deep breathing exercise, increasing up to a maximum six counts in and six counts out.

Visualize A Cleansing Breath

1. As you inhale, imagine clean pure air moving into your body. This cleansing breath moves all the way to the tip of your toes and as you continue to inhale, it fills you all the way to the top of your head.

2. As you consciously exhale, imagine your lungs collapsing and pulling all of the toxins and stale air out of your entire body.

Create the Sound of Relaxation – first master the steps above, before tackling this one. It simply helps your body to relax even more. It does not affect the amount of cleansing oxygen that you are already taking in.

- 1.** Take a deep breath in, drop your jaw as you open your mouth and say “Ahh” as you exhale. You should feel the back of your throat open up as your tongue drops away from the roof of your mouth.
- 2.** Try to maintain your throat and mouth in this same position open position, and take your next breath in through your open mouth. Again, exhale and say “Ahh”.
- 3.** Practice this cycle a few times. Notice how as you say and hear the “Ahh” sound, your whole body relaxes. Also notice that the movement of the breath in your throat feels different than when you breathe through your nose.
- 4.** Next, with the same mouth and throat position, stop trying to say “Ahh” as you exhale. Continue to inhale and exhale through your mouth.
- 5.** Practice this cycle a few times. Notice that on its own, your inhalation and exhalation will now make a noise that sounds like a quiet “ahh”. This sound is caused by the breath moving over your vocal chords, instead of staying within your windpipe, as it does when you breathe normally.
- 6.** The last step is to slowly close your jaw, while maintaining the open space in your mouth and throat. As you inhale and exhale through your nose, you should still hear the “ahh” sound from your throat.
- 7.** As you become more proficient in this, you will be able to position your mouth and throat without going through all of the intermediary steps. People around your may notice that the quiet “ahh” is not so quiet!
- 8.** Moving your breath over your vocal chords in conjunction with the deep abdominal breathing, allows your body to relax in as little as 2-3 minutes.