

BREATHING EXERCISES



Elena Maganto PhD, AADP
Nutrition Health Coach

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Power of Breathing

Undoubtedly, the most important component to human health and vitality is oxygen. In fact, human life would not be possible without it. Oxygen produces ATP (adenosine triphosphate) and without ATP, our bodies would immediately shut down. When a person breathes, there is an exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen. The oxygen, which is taken in by the body from the atmosphere around us, is picked up by the hemoglobin in the blood and distributed to all of the body's trillions of cells where it is then used to fuel the cells and release energy (ATP).

In addition, the makeup of the human body is largely composed of the element oxygen, especially factoring in that water is composed of 33% oxygen.

It's clear then that optimal oxygenation of your cells through proper nutrition, fluid intake, exercise, and stress management is absolutely necessary in order to maintain your health and create a vital life.

"Improper breathing is a common cause of ill health. If I had to limit my advice on healthier living to just one tip, it would be simply to learn how to breathe correctly. There is no single more powerful - or more simple - daily practice to further your health and well being than breathwork." Andrew Weil, M.D.

Exercises:

Breathing meditation

This is a wonderful one that will calm and center you in any situation. It can also be used when you feel overwhelmed by a craving. Very often the craving will pass by the end of 10–20 breaths.

To practice: Close your eyes, place your hands on your belly and just tune into the sensations around the inhale and the exhale. Gradually begin to deepen the breath, taking 10–20 slow deep conscious breaths deeply into and out of the belly. Do this meditation often. It is better 5 minutes a day than 45 minutes 3 times a week.



Breathing techniques for detoxifying

Sounding Breath is done lying on the ground in the corpse pose, letting all your limbs relax. Exhale completely and then slowly draw in your breath through the nose. As you inhale, feel how your lungs and abdomen fill up. As you exhale, contract your throat to make a slight hissing sound and completely exhale and empty your lungs. Let your breath be long and slow.

Sitting Breath is done while sitting, so it can be done at any point. Exhale with a deep sigh in order to reset your diaphragm. Then breathe slowly through your nose for a count of 7, and hold your breath for a count of 7. Then for another count of 7, exhale through your nose. Repeat this three times, and this will help calm your spirit and relax your nerves.

The benefits of doing Pranayama (breathing exercises) every morning (or evening) for 20 to 25 minutes include:

- Increases lung capacity and improves breathing efficiency
- Improves circulation, normalizes blood pressure and improves cardiovascular efficiency
- Boosts the immune system and enhances immunity
- Increases energy levels and gives lots of positive energy
- Strengthens and tones the nervous system
- Combats anxiety and depression and improves sleep
- Improves digestion and excretory functions
- Provides massage to the internal organs, stimulates the glands and enhances endocrine functions,
- Normalizes body weight and provides great conditioning for weight loss

