

Proper breathing is one of the most beneficial things that you can do for your physical and emotional health.

We can survive for a time without food or even water. We cannot survive without breathing!

Breathing not only supplies our organs with oxygen, it also rids the body of waste products and toxins.....and it is all about flow! When we are flowing, we feel good....it's that simple!

When we are in pain, stressed or anxious we have a tendency to hold our breath or breathe shallow breaths. This sends a distress signal to our brain that we are not feeling safe and relaxed, and can make the situation worse.

Most people do not breathe properly and only use around 60% of their lung capacity. Because the exchange of gases take part in the lower part of the lungs very few people actually get sufficient oxygen throughout their body.

By using breathing exercises we can avoid this and also promote better health and emotional peace.

Are you a chest breather? Or an abdominal breather?

Place your right hand on your chest and your left hand on your abdomen. Breathe in, which hand moves higher? If your right hand is higher, you are a chest breather. If your left hand is higher, you are an abdominal breather. Now push your abdomen out as you breathe in, practice pushing it out and keeping the hand on the chest still. Fill your abdomen with air and THEN fill the lungs, now hold it.....and... as you breathe out release the air from the lungs first and then empty the abdomen. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, to practice this. Empty the lungs and abdomen; make sure your out-breath is at least twice as long as your in-breath. Focus on the out breath, blow it out as if you are telling a child to shh..... and keep it going until your lungs and then abdomen are empty.

When you are Chest breathing it is inefficient because then the greatest amount of blood flow occurs in the lower lobes of the lungs, areas that have limited air expansion in chest breathers.

Rapid, shallow, chest breathing results in less oxygen transfer to the blood and subsequent poor delivery of nutrients to the tissues.

This is a learned habit, so therefore, like when you learn to drive, you can train the body to improve its breathing technique.

If you do this consciously and regularly you will breathe from the abdomen most of the time, even while asleep.

Daily exercises

Breathing exercises should be done at least twice a day, when you wake up and before you go to sleep. It is also beneficial to do them if you feel stressed, anxious or are in pain.

- 1. Breathe in, through your nose, feeling your abdomen expand higher than your chest, this fills the base of the lungs with oxygen. (If it helps you can count as you breathe in.....1.2.3.4.)***
- 2. Hold this breathe for a few seconds, not uncomfortably long just pause, and then exhale slowly, through your mouth,***
- 3. As you exhale let the breath move down through your body, feel it releasing all the tension and flow out through your toes.***
- 4. Exhale completely; contract the abdominal muscles, completely emptying the lungs.***
- 5. Hold for a few seconds andrepeat, so that you do 5 breathes in and out.***

*Repeat at least twice a day, you can also do these exercises while watching television, standing in a queue or at other times throughout the day. The more often you do them the quicker you will breathe like this automatically. **By focusing on your breathing like this you go into a mini meditative state releasing all toxins emotionally and physically from the body.***