

Breathing Exercises Copyright 2014 Natural Terrain Naturopathic Clinic. Dr. Christina Bjorndal

Alternate Nostril Breath:

Benefits:

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

Technique:

- Sit in a comfortably cross-legged position, back straight
- Raise your right hand and place your ring finger against your left nostril, closing it off
- Inhale deeply and slowly through the right nostril to the count of four
- Close off the right nostril with your thumb and retain the breath for a count of 1-4 seconds
- Open the left nostril and exhale to the count of 4-8 seconds. The longer you can make the exhalation, the better. Concentrate on completely emptying the lungs.
- Breathe in through that same left nostril to the count of four
- Close off the nostril with the ring finger again and hold to the count of 1-4 seconds
- Exhale through the right nostril to the count of 4-8 seconds. This makes up one round.
- Repeat these rounds of alternate nostril breathing five more times, or up ten minutes if you are concerned about insomnia
- Practice a 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.
- DO NOT push yourself with the holding position or by increasing the ratio until you are comfortable doing so.
- DO NOT make the breathing rhythmic, smooth and slow. You can work on making it inaudible eventually.
- The importance of this breath cannot be over-emphasized. The body and mind are closely inter-related 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.

Complete Breath:

Benefits:

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

Technique:

- Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position or in a chair
- Straighten your back, which will straighten your thorax for easier breathing.
- Inhale slowly through the nose, breathing deeply, consciously.
- Take five seconds to fill the lower part of the lungs, by expanding the ribs and pushing the abdomen out.
- Concentrate on filling the top of the lungs for the next five seconds. This will expand the chest and tighten the abdomen slightly.
- Hold the breath for 1-5 seconds
- Exhale slowly until you have emptied the lungs
- Repeat 4-5 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
- Do not slump. For maximum efficiency the thorax must be straight

The Cleansing Breath:

Benefits:

- Clears lungs, sinuses and nasal passages
- Relieves colds
- Tones the nervous system
- Strengthens the lungs, Thorax, and abdomen
- Purifies the blood stream and clears the head
- Aids digestion
- Stimulated the liver, spleen and pancreas

Technique:

- Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position or a chair, back straight.
- Inhale deeply, pushing the abdomen out, and taking in as much air as possible in the space of 1 second.
- Whack your abdomen forcefully to expel the air through the nostrils. The sensation should be one of having been punched in the stomach.
- Inhale again by pushing the abdomen out and letting the air rush back into the vacuum created by the exhalation
- The whole process, inhalation and exhalation should take not much more than 1-1/2 seconds. Both should be forceful and will be quite audible
- 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
- Do not exhale consciously, but let the action of the abdomen do it for you.

