The connection of Breath to beauty and wellness

Breathing



Hello and welcome to week 258, thank you for all your support and feedback, we are very grateful for your visits to the blog from all of us at Isabel’s Beauty Blog.In this post we are sharing information on Breathing, We often get asked why do you have posts about health concerns, nutrition and spiritual matters, it is very a simple answer actually, for us it is a

connection of body, mind and spirit that we all share and there is not doubt in our minds about it. I grew up with that knowledge and in the history of the planet these facts are well documented, with that said, it is commonsense if you think about that if you are not happy it definitely shows in our overall looks, even when we are extreme beauties, the unhappy attitude won't really take us far when we have imbalances either internally or externally, there is something about that that is not so beautiful won't you agree? So breathing is one of those facts that is imperative to address. In Chinese Medicine the lungs rule skin!! so there is a great reason to keep the respiratory system in top shape. Posture plays a great roll on breathing and incorrect posture is not very beautiful, so as you can see the overall balance is what keeps our external and internal beauty in shape. Enjoy the post and remember to share with family and friends, we wish you health, happiness and ideal wealth.

What Controls Your Breathing?

According to http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hlw/controls

At the base of your brain is a respiratory control center that controls your breathing. This center sends ongoing signals down your spine and to the muscles involved in breathing.

These signals ensure your breathing muscles contract (tighten) and relax regularly. This function allows your breathing to

happen automatically, without you being aware of it, is pretty amazing don’t you think aside from al the work that the body does with us running around all day!.

To a limited degree, you can change your breathing rate, such as by breathing faster or holding your breath. Your emotions also can change your breathing. For example, being scared or angry can affect your breathing pattern, thinking, crying, excited etc,.

Your breathing will change depending on how active you are and the condition of the air around you. For example, you need to breathe more often when you do physical activity. In contrast, your body needs to restrict how much air you breathe, if the air contains irritants or toxins to protect us from it.

To adjust your breathing and changing needs, your body has many sensors in your brain, blood vessels, muscles, and lungs.

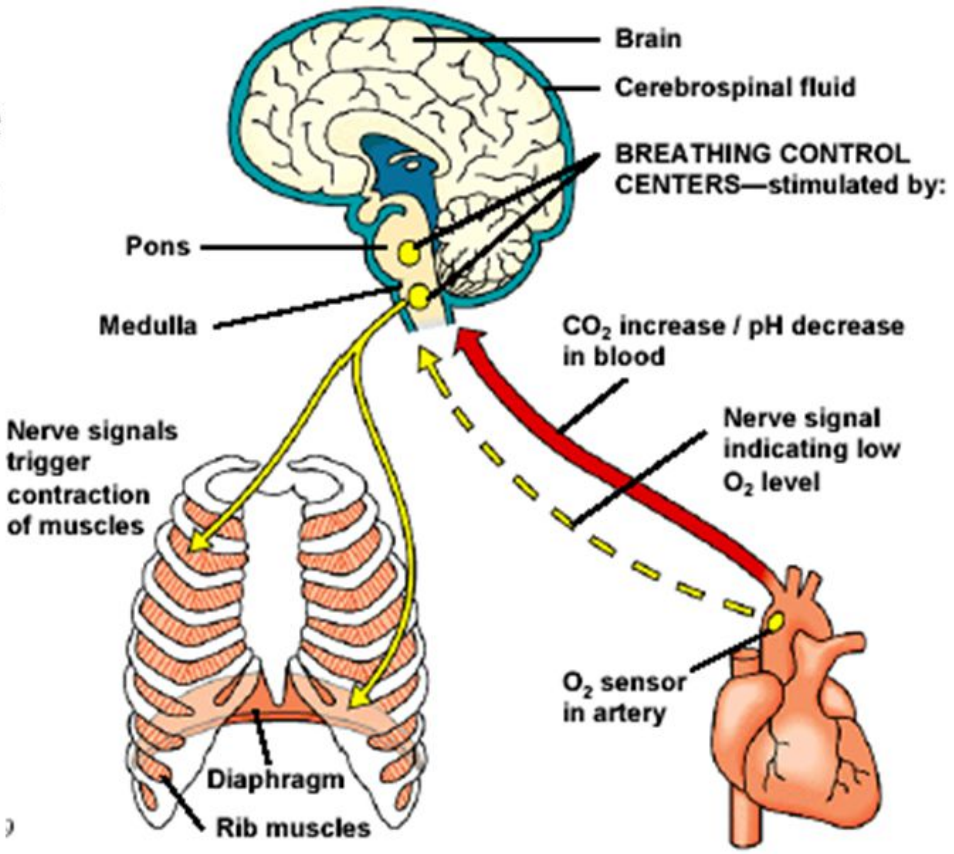
Sensors in the brain and in two major blood vessels (the carotid (ka-ROT-id) artery and the aorta) major blood vessels,detect carbon dioxide or oxygen levels in your blood and change your breathing rate as needed, it is just amazing what the body does and we are not even aware of its work.

Sensors in the airways detect lung irritants. The sensors can trigger sneezing or coughing. In people who have asthma, the sensors may cause the muscles around the airways in the lungs to contract and tighten. This makes the airways smaller.

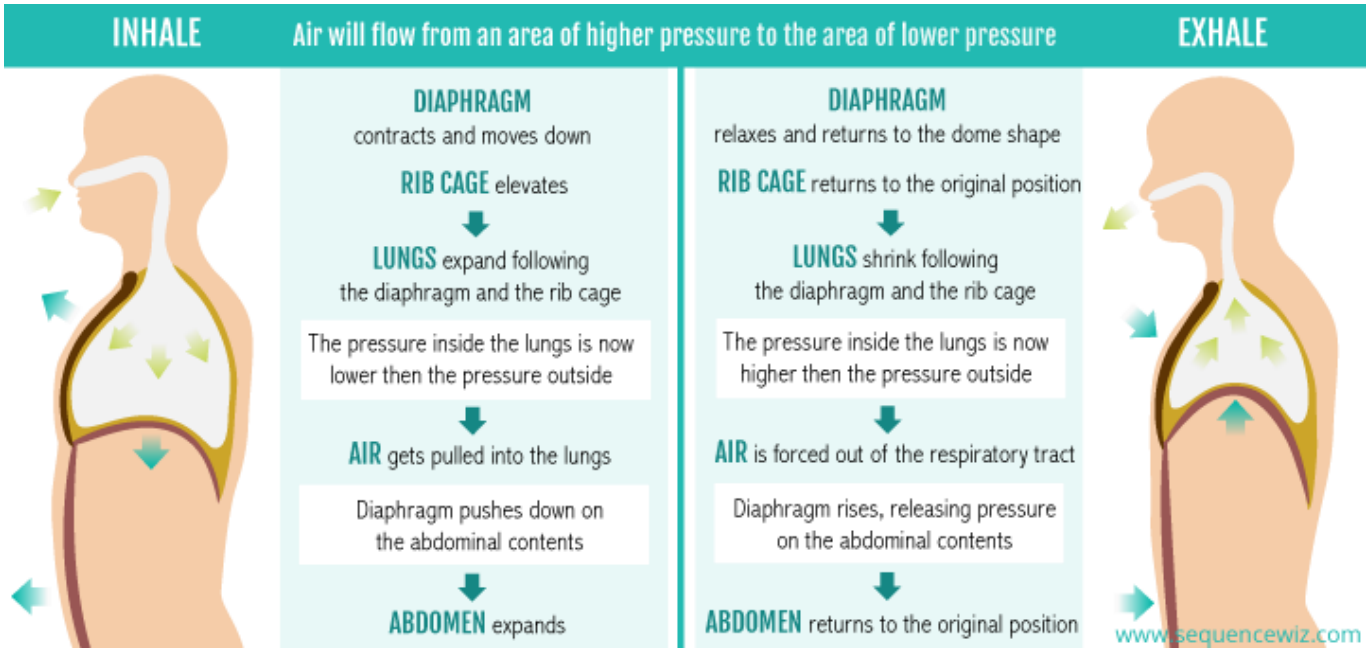
Sensors in the alveoli (air sacs) can detect fluid buildup in the lung tissues. These sensors are thought to trigger rapid, shallow breathing.

Sensors in your joints and muscles detect movement of your arms or legs. These sensors may play a role in increasing your breathing rate when you’re physically active.

Control cente in the brain regulate breathing



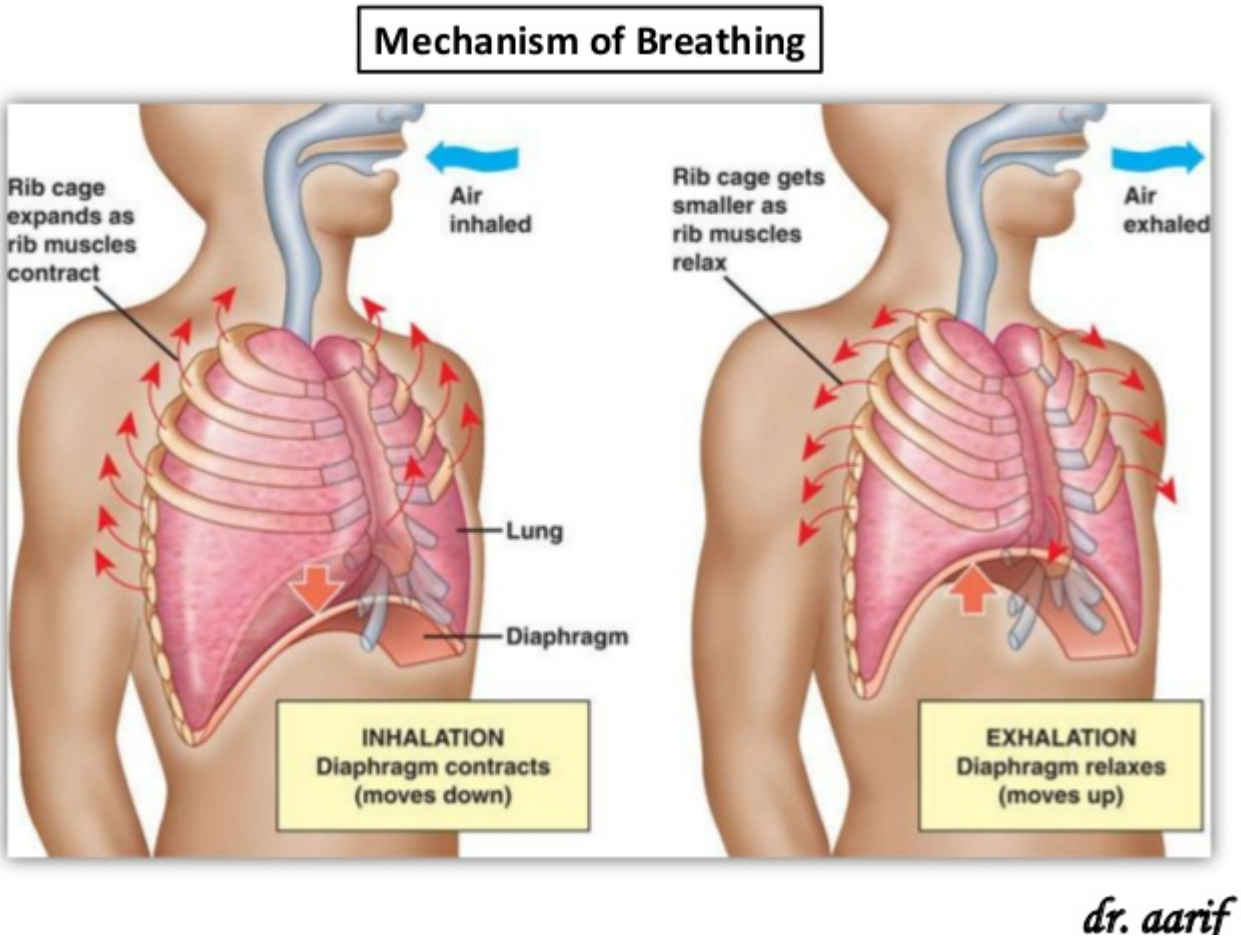
What Happens When You Breathe?



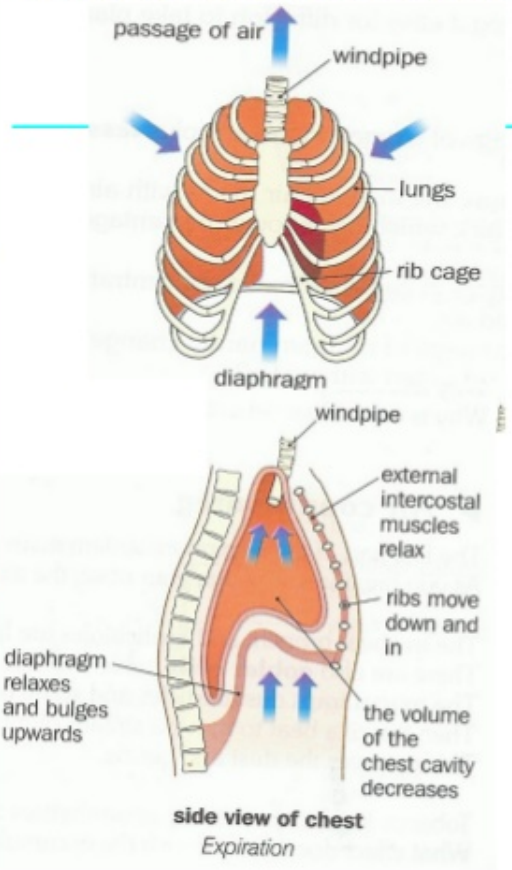
Breathing In (Inhalation)

When you breathe in, or inhale, your diaphragm contracts (tightens) and moves downward. This increases the space in your chest cavity, into which your lungs expand. The intercostal muscles between your ribs also help enlarge the chest cavity to contain your different amounts of air inhaled. They contract to pull your rib cage both upward and outward when you inhale.

As your lungs expand, air is sucked in through your nose or mouth. The air travels down your windpipe and into your lungs. After passing through your bronchial tubes, the air finally reaches and enters the alveoli (air sacs).



The mechanism of Expiration (exhalation)

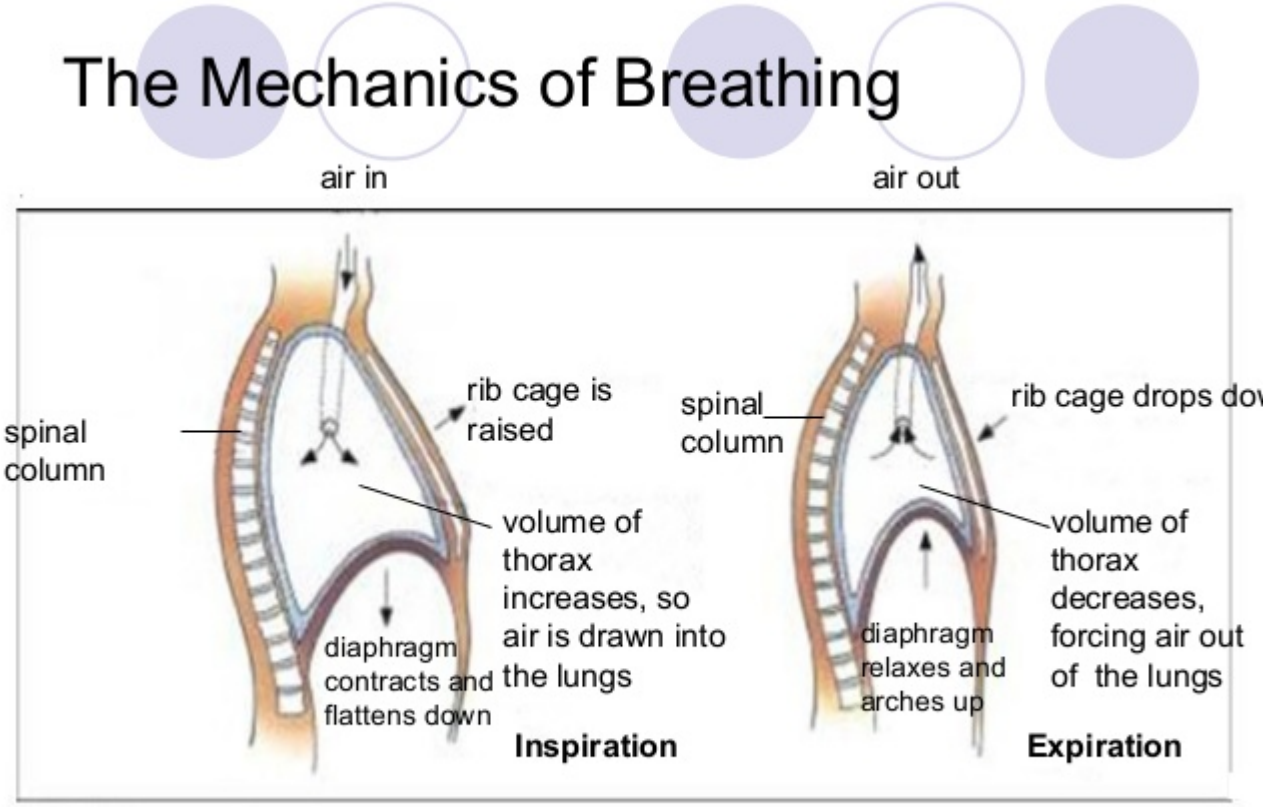


- **Describe the mechanisms involved in expiration**
- The diaphragm and **external** intercostal muscles relax. The **internal** intercostal muscles contract. So the rib cage moves downwards and inwards. The diameter and length of the thorax decreases.
- Overall, the volume of the thorax decreases which results in an increase in pressure in the lungs compared to atmospheric pressure.
- Air leaves the lungs – which deflate.
- The elastic fibres between the alveoli recoil and the alveoli return to their natural shape.

Through the very thin walls of the alveoli, oxygen from the air passes to the surrounding capillaries (blood vessels). A red blood cell protein called hemoglobin (HEE-muh-glow-bin) helps move oxygen from the air sacs to the blood.

At the same time, carbon dioxide moves from the capillaries into the air sacs. The gas has traveled in the bloodstream from the right side of the heart through the pulmonary artery.

Oxygen-rich blood from the lungs is carried through a network of capillaries to the pulmonary vein. This vein delivers the oxygen-rich blood to the left side of the heart. The left side of the heart pumps the blood to the rest of the body. There, the oxygen in the blood moves from blood vessels into surrounding tissues.



Side view of movements in the thorax during inspiration and expiration

Breathing Out (Exhalation)

When you breathe out, or exhale, your diaphragm relaxes and moves upward into the chest cavity. The intercostal muscles between the ribs also relax to reduce the space in the chest

cavity.

As the space in the chest cavity gets smaller, air rich in carbon dioxide is forced out of your lungs and windpipe, and then out of your nose or mouth.

Breathing out requires no effort from your body unless you have a lung disease or are doing physical activity. When you’re physically active, your abdominal muscles contract and push your diaphragm against your lungs even more than usual. This rapidly pushes air out of your lungs.

BREATHING BEGINS IN THE NOSE



When you own your breath, nobody can steal your peace.

Breathing is one of the basic human functions and yet it's the most powerful force that keeps us alive. When we focus on breath, we are at the source of our life.

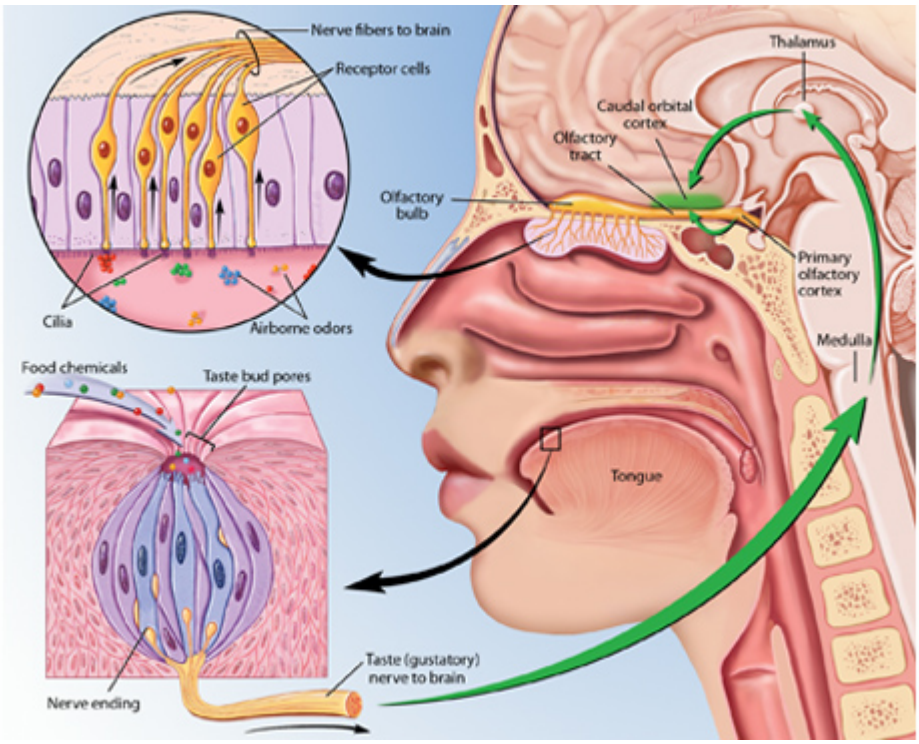
Breathing is at the source of all powers in human beings

Breathing connects our mind with the body. It helps us being in the rhythm of life. When our breathing isn't rhythmic, we fall apart.

According to: http://www.drstandley.com/bodysystems_respiratory.shtml

About 18 – 20 times a minute, you breathe in, keep in mind that this is an average count. When a doctor wants to know how are you breathing he or she puts his or her hand on your shoulder or back and looks at the clock, they are keeping track of how many times you breathe within one minute. This is how one of your vital signs is measured, called “respiration.”

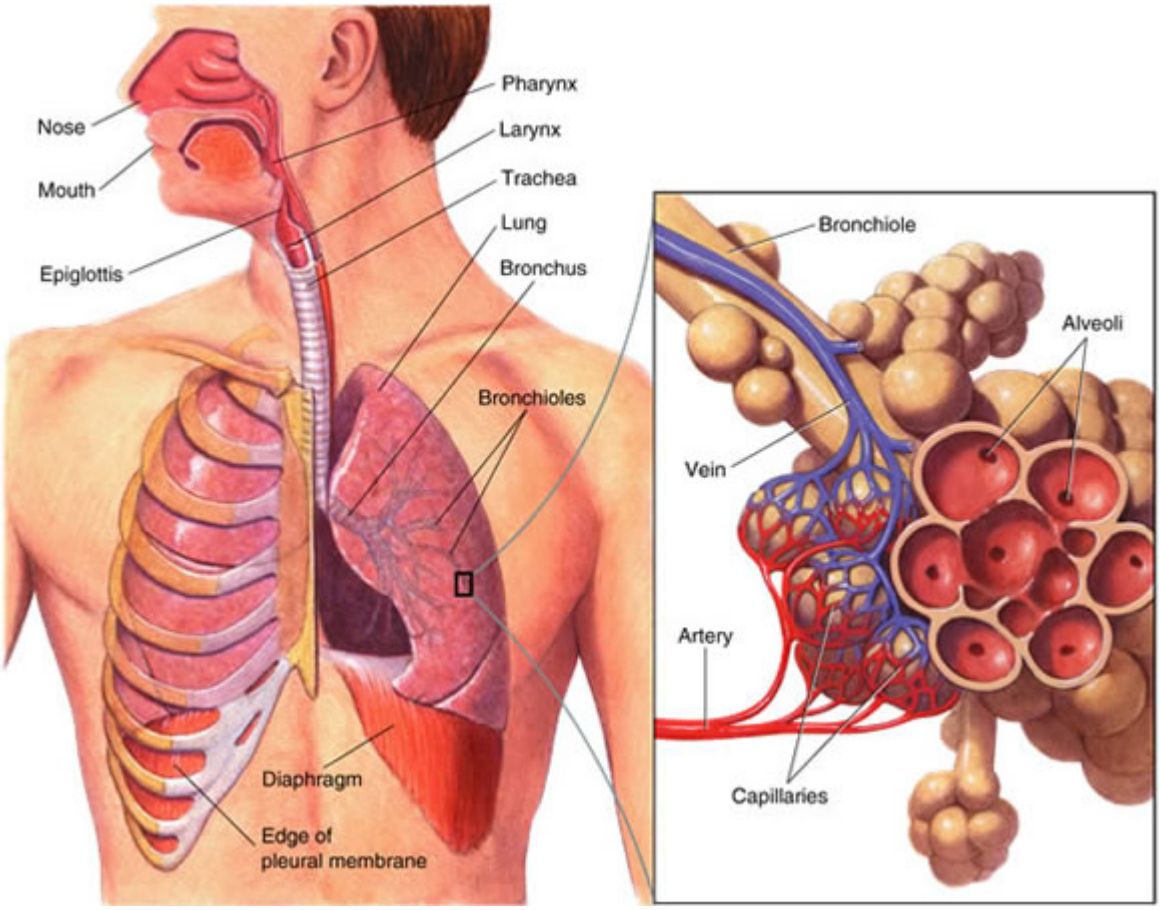
When you breathe, you inhale air and pass it through your nasal passages where the air is filtered, heated, moistened and enters the back of the throat. The esophagus (food tube) is located at the back of the throat and the trachea (windpipe) for air is located at the front of the throat. When you eat, a tiny flap called the “epiglottis” closes down to cover the windpipe so food won’t go down the wrong pipe. Here it is important to remember that breathing is meant to be done through the nose not the mouth for very specific biological reasons!.



WHAT ARE THOSE TINY AIR SACS FOR?

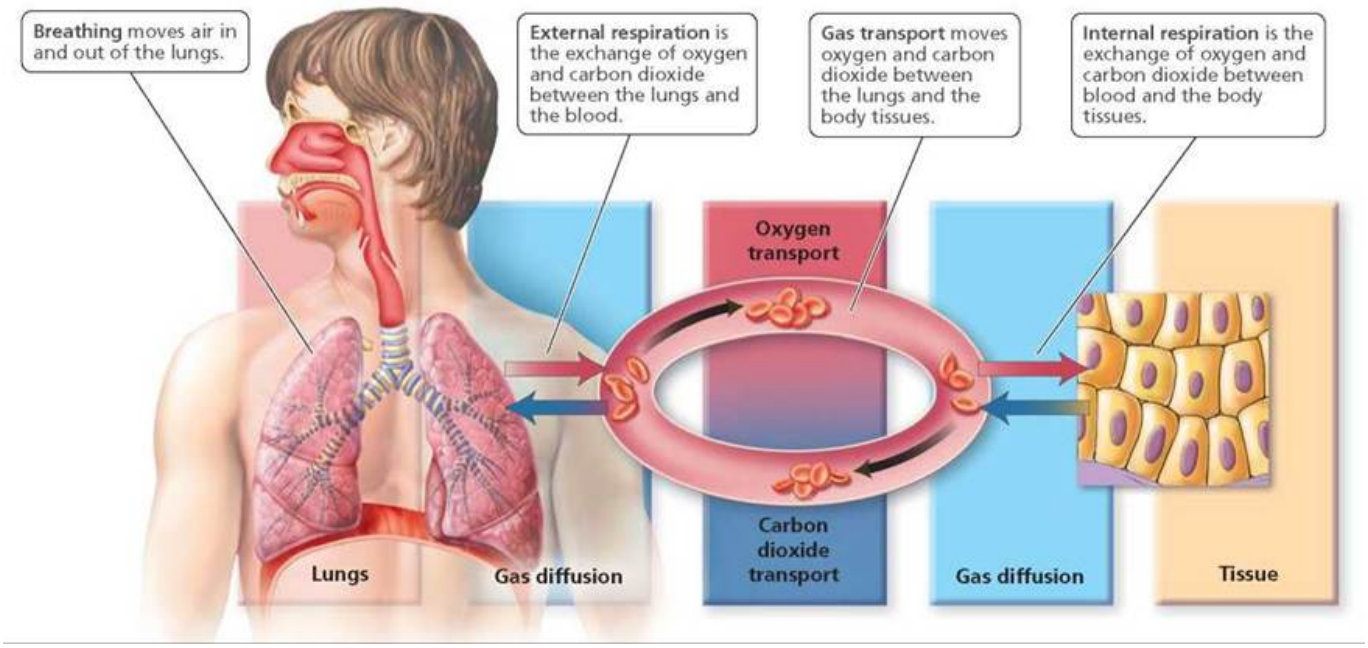
Air flows down through the windpipe, past the vocal cords (voice box), to where the lowest ribs meet the center of your chest. This is where your windpipe divides into two tubes which lead to each of the two lungs that fill most of your ribcage. Each lung feels just like a sponge. Inside each of

your sponge-like lungs, there are tubes called bronchi which branch into even smaller tubes just like the branches of a tree. At the end of these tubes are millions of itty bitty bubbles or sacs called alveoli. If you were to spread out flat all of the air sacs in the lungs of an adult, the tissue would cover an area about the third of the size of a tennis court.



HOW DOES THE OXYGEN/WASTE EXCHANGE WORK?

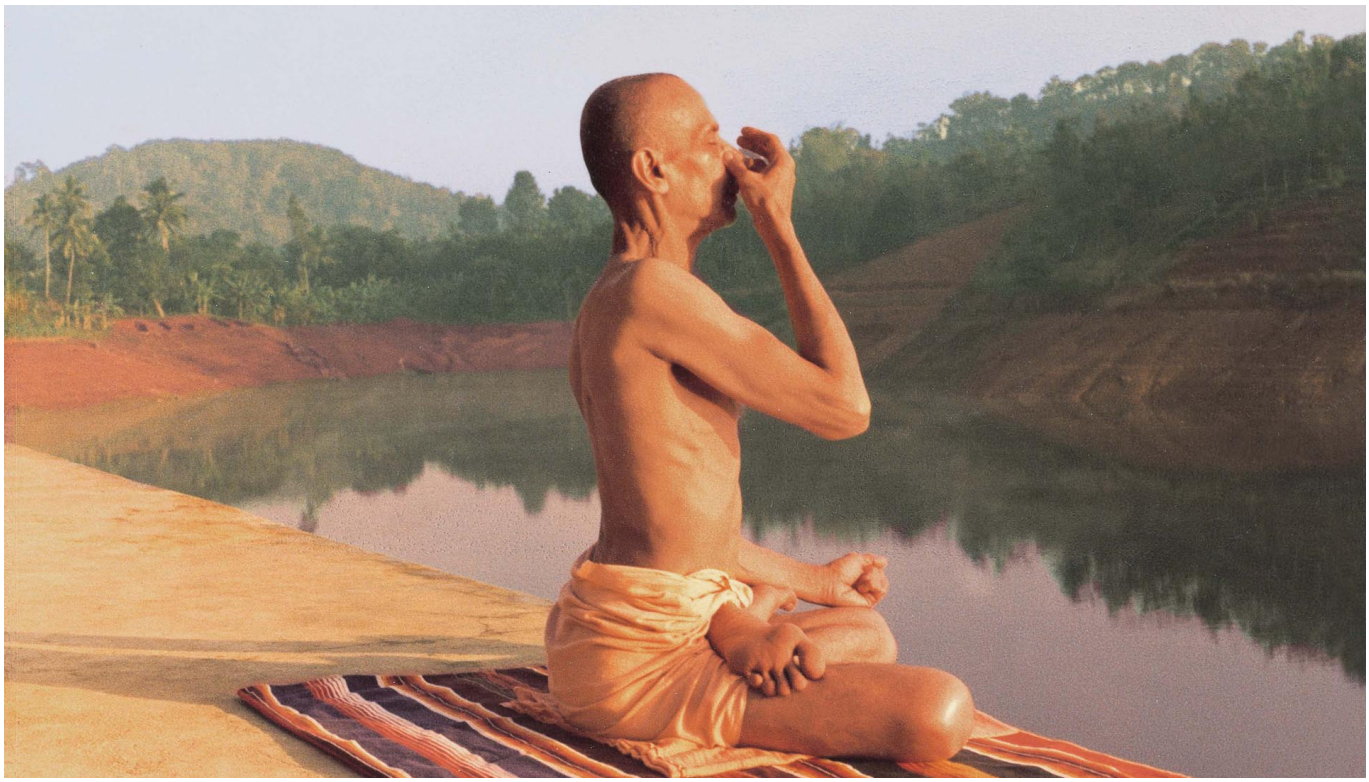
This phenomenal exchange works with the assistance of the red blood cells in your bloodstream. Your red blood cells are like boxcars on a railroad track. They will show up at the sacs at just the right time, ready to trade in old carbon dioxide that your body’s cells have made for some new oxygen you just breathed in. During this process, the red blood cells turn from purple to a sparkling red color as they start carrying the oxygen to ALL the cells in your body.



WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CARBON DIOXIDE?

The carbon dioxide (waste) that your body made and now can't use will go through the lungs, back up your windpipe and out with every single exhale. This is a chemical exchange of breathing in and out (inhalation/exhalation). This is an automatic process that you don't even have to think about. Unless of course, you smoke, then you'd be depriving ALL of your cells of oxygen.

Pranayama



What is Prana and Where Did Pranayamas Come From?

According to: http://www.artofliving.org/us-en/yoga/breathing-techniques/yoga-and-pranayama

In the ancient Indian system of yoga they identified prana as the universal life force or energy which distinguishes the living from the dead, wow that is a checking point isn't it?, and flows through thousands of subtle energy channels they called 'nadis' and energy centers called 'chakras.'

These original yogic seers observed the power of the breath to increase one's prana and developed special breathing techniques to increase life energy, maintain health and create a calm, clear state of mind that is conducive for meditation.

Where do the sources of Prana come from?

We get prana from food, rest, breath and by being in a calm, happy frame of mind.

There is more prana in fresh foods than canned (it really relates to life force), frozen or stale foods. Similarly, vegetarian foods a said to be generally of high prana, while meat, being dead, is considered low or even negative prana, the fresher the source the more life in it, doesn't that make sense?.

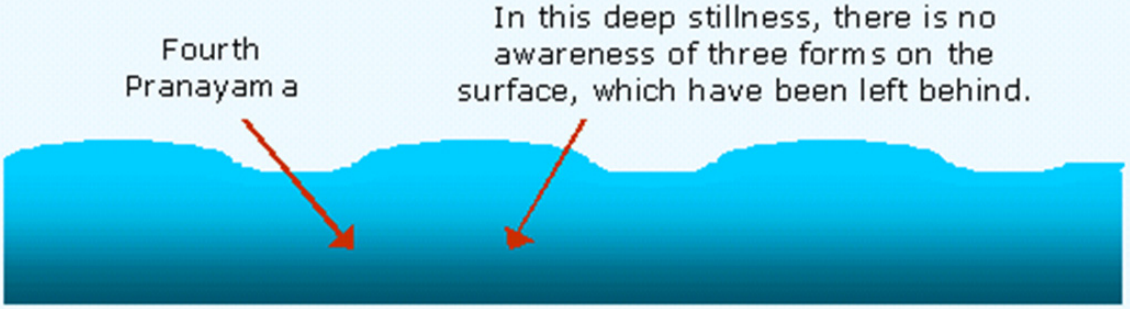
Sources of Prana can be found in fresh food than canned (it really relates to life force), frozen or stale foods. Similarly, vegetarian foods is said to be generally of high prana, while meat, being dead, is considered low or even negative prana, the fresher the source the more life in it, doesn't that make sense?.are And, as we will see in a moment, the way we breathe has a powerful effect on how we feel.

Four Aspects of Breath

First Three Aspects of Breath/Pranayama: There are three aspects to breathing or pranayama practices: 1) exhalation, 2) inhalation, and 3) the two transitions between them. These three are like the waves in an ocean, which have: 1) rising of waves, 2) falling of waves, and 3) the two transitions between them.



Fourth Pranayama: However, there is a fourth aspect of prana, the energy behind, or subtler than the gross breath. This is like diving deep into the ocean, deeper or beyond the three forms that are on the surface. This is the goal of all breathing practices, to enter into this fourth pranayama. It sets the stage for advanced meditation.



Yoga Sutras 2.51-2.52: The fourth pranayama is that continuous prana which surpasses, is beyond, or behind those others that operate in the exterior and interior realms or fields. Through that pranayama the veil of karmasheya (2.12) that covers the inner illumination or light is thinned, diminishes and vanishes.

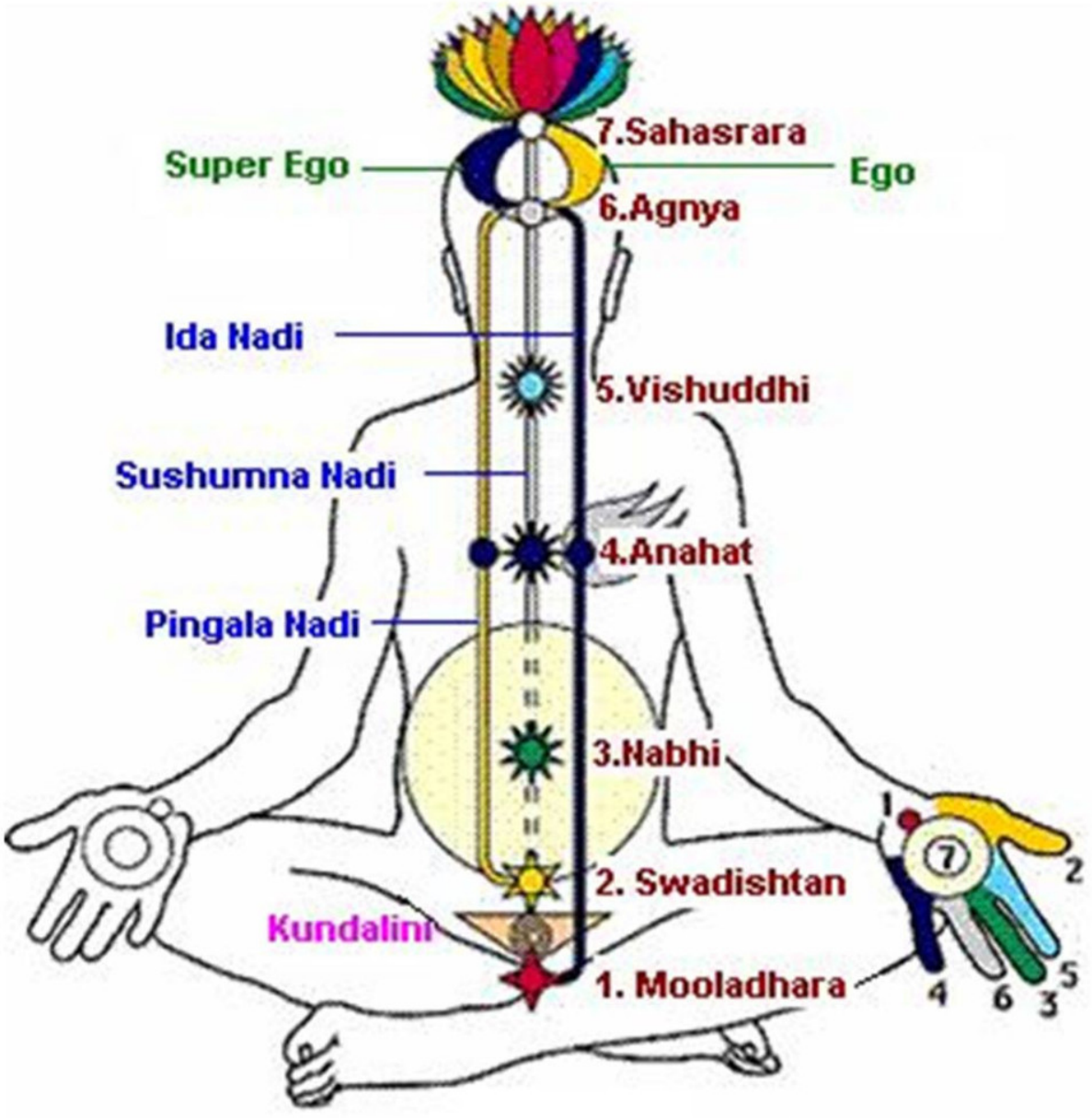
SwamiJ.com

The Effects of High and Low Prana

It was discovered thousands of years ago that the quantity and quality of prana and the way it flows through the nadis (subtle energy channels) determines one’s state of mind, if you notice when we are stressed we hold our breath and bread from the top of our chest instead of our lower lungs.

Due to lack of attention, the energy channels in the average person may be partially blocked, making the flow of prana broken and jerky. This results in increased worry, fear, uncertainty, conflict, tension and other negative emotions.

When the prana level is high and its flow is continuous, smooth and steady, then the mind is calm, positive and enthusiastic.


7.Sahasrara
Super Ego
Ego
6.Agnya
Ida Nadi
5.Vishuddhi
Sushumna Nadi
4.Anahat
Pingala Nadi
3.Nabhi
2. Swadishtan
Kundalini
1. Mooladhara
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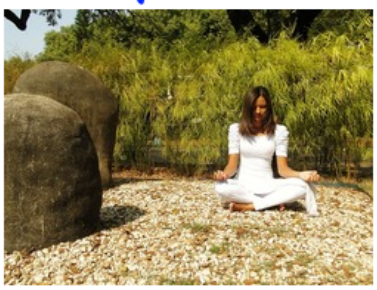
Breathing for Life: The Mind-Body Healing Benefits of Pranayama

From: http://www.chopra.com/ccl/breathing-for-life-the-mind-body-healing-benefits-of-pranayama

BENEFITS OF PRANAYAM

- RESPIRATORY- ELASTICITY OF LUNGS, ENHANCES VITAL CAPACITY, TONED RESPITATORY MUSCLES, SLOWER RESPIRATORY MUSCLES,
- CIRCULATORY- TONES THE HEART, DIAPHRAGM, REDUCES HEART RATE
- DIGESTIVE SYSTEM- MASSAGES LIVER, SPLEEN, PANCREAS, STOMACH

Pranayama Breathing:a Quick Definition



Pranayam is made up of two words Prana + Ayam.

Prana:

is the vital force present in whole cosmos.
We have been provided Prana, the supreme source of energy by the creator.
Proper utilisation of this free source of energy
can make remarkable changes to our physical and mental health,
vitality and self confidence. Prana is more subtle than air
and can be defined as the energy essence
that is within everything in the universe.

Ayama:

means to control or to give a rhythm or a definite flow.

In this sense Pranayama may be defined as a process and technique
through which vital energy can be stimulated and increased
and this brings about perfect control over the flow of Prana within the body.
Pranayama locks the scattering of pranic energy,
consolidates it at the centre of your body-mind complex
and laser-beams it to an intense awareness of the self.
In simple language Pranayam can be said to be: the right form
of breathing technique to control our energy.

The Chopra Center

by: Sheila Patel, M.D.

“For breath is life, and if you breathe well you will live long on earth.”
~Sanskrit proverb

Breath is essential to life. It is the first thing we do when we are born and the last thing we do when we leave. In between that time, we take about half a billion breaths more less every one is different. What we may not realize is that the mind, body, and breath are intimately connected and can influence each other in a very deep way. Our breathing is influenced by our thoughts, and our thoughts and physiology can be influenced by our breath. Learning to breathe consciously and with awareness can be a valuable tool in helping to restore balance in the mind and body.

Researchers have documented the benefits of a regular practice of simple, deep breathing which include:

- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Lower/stabilized blood pressure
- Increased energy levels
- Muscle relaxation
- Decreased feelings of stress and overwhelm
- Helps with sleep
- Helps maintain the structure that supports our body

In the medical community, there is a growing appreciation for the positive impact that deep breathing can have on the

physiology, both in the mind and the body. According to the research, many of these beneficial effects can be attributed to reducing the stress response in the body, by that reducing inflammation mentally and physically. To understand how this works, let’s look at the stress response in more detail.

Pranayama as a Tool to Counter Stress

When you experience stressful thoughts, your sympathetic nervous system triggers the body’s ancient fight-or-flight response, giving you a burst of energy to respond to the perceived danger. Your breathing becomes shallow and rapid, and you primarily breathe from the chest and not the lower lungs this action accelerates the heart beat influencing blood pressure, relating adrenaline now the Adrenal glands get compromised and so on. This can make you feel short of breath, which is a common symptom when you feel anxious or frustrated. At the same time, your body produces a surge of hormones such as cortisol and epinephrine (also known as adrenaline), which increase your blood pressure and pulse rate and put you in a revved up state of high alert the whole system is in alarm mode.

The Vagus nerve is a huge deal, and what activating this nerve does to the entire body system. We can activate this nerve with our breath, check the image below so you can get an idea how tremendous effect this nerve has on our wellbeing.



With deep breathing, you can reverse these symptoms instantly and create a sense of calm in your mind and body. When you breathe deeply and slowly, you activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which reverses the stress response in your body. Deep breathing stimulates the main nerve in the parasympathetic nervous system—the vagus nerve—slowing down

your heart rate, lowering your blood pressure, and calming your body and mind.

In addition, with deep breathing, you engage the abdominal muscles and diaphragm instead of the muscles in the upper chest and neck (when we spend long periods of time in stress mode or computer work etc. and we hold the breath in the paper region of our body we can definitely attribute a stiff neck resulting from this action). This conditioning of the respiratory muscles results in improved efficiency of oxygen exchange with every breath by allowing more air exchange to occur in the lower lungs. It also reduces strain on the muscles of the neck and upper chest, allowing these muscles to relax. In short, deep breathing is more relaxing and efficient, allowing higher volumes of oxygen to reach the body's cells and tissues.

As well as reversing the physical stress response in the body, deep breathing can help calm and slow down the emotional turbulence in the mind. Breathing can have an immediate effect on diffusing emotional energy so there is less reactivity to our emotions.

4 Deep Breathing Techniques

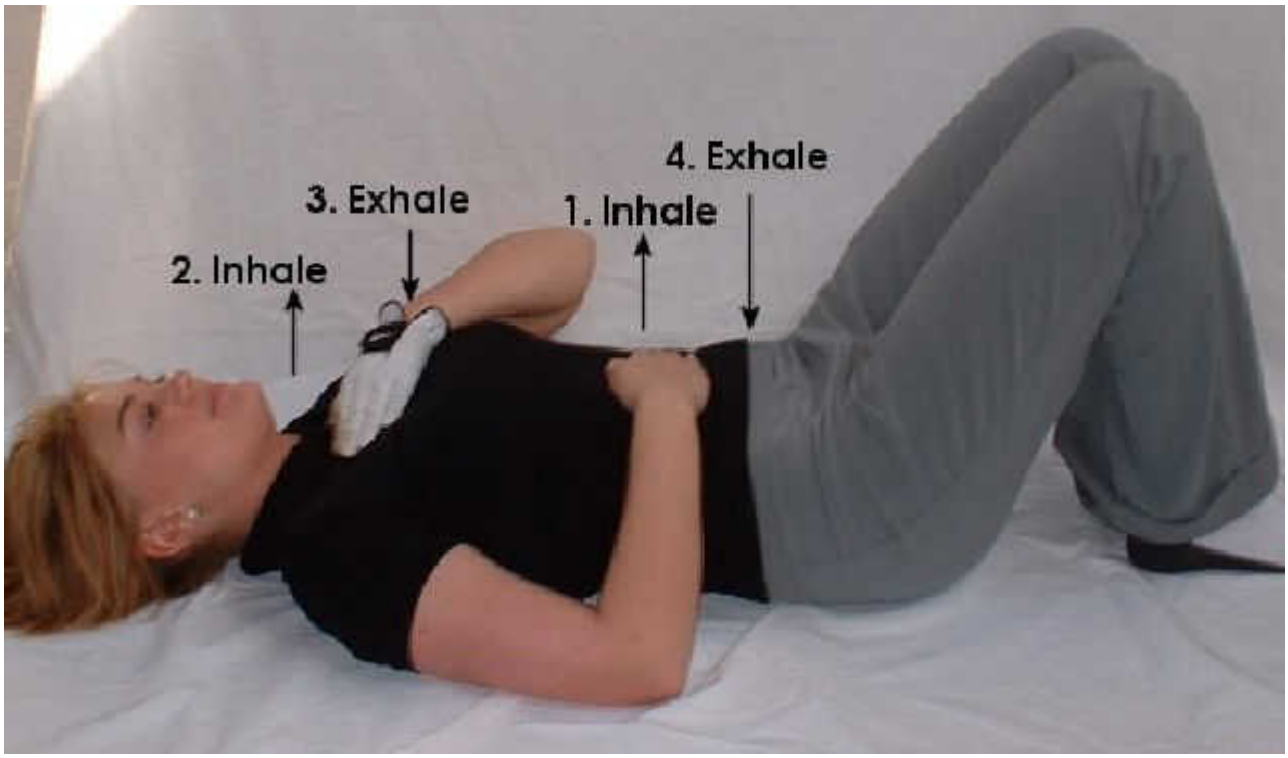
Beyond the practice of simple deep breathing, the ancient yogis described different types of rhythmic deep breathing

techniques that can have differing effects on the mind and body. In fact, many studies document the beneficial effects of yogic breathing in treating depression, anxiety, PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder), COPD (chronic destructive pulmonary disease), and asthma, aside from all the physiological benefits. There are also theories that support the notion that by slowing down and controlling the breath, we can improve our longevity.

The basis for all deep breathing practices originates in the science of yoga, specifically the branch of yoga known as pranayama. The word *pranayama* is derived from two Sanskrit words: *prana* (life force) and *yama* (control). By controlling the breath, you can influence every aspect of your life. You can train yourself to breathe in a way that has a positive influence on your health.

Each of the following simple yogic breathing techniques has specific effects on the mind-body physiology.

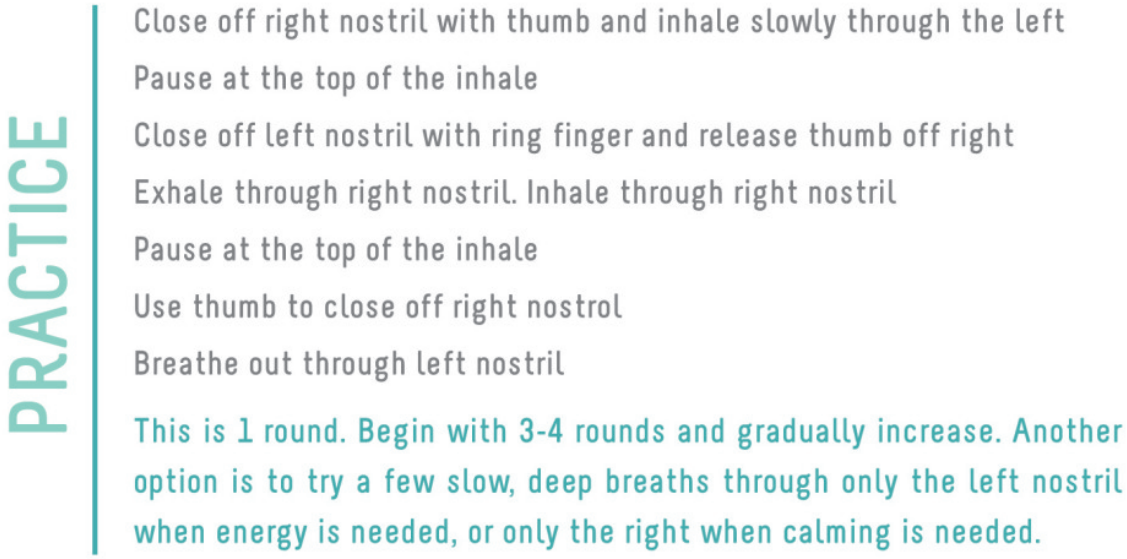
Complete Belly Breath


4. Exhale
3. Exhale
1. Inhale
2. Inhale

Place one hand on your belly, slowly relax your abdominal muscles, and inhale slowly through the nose, bringing air into the bottom of your lungs. You should feel your abdomen rise. This expands the lower parts of the lungs. Continue to inhale as your rib cage expands outward, and finally, the collar bones rise. At the peak of the inhalation, pause for a moment, then exhale gently from the top of your lungs to the bottom. At the end of exhalation, contract your abdominal muscles slightly to push residual air out of the bottom of your lungs.

Alternate Nostril Breathing





https://youtu.be/WxEqooqgCEs?list=PL4lXvdRDLPTW3tQ8dXFoXJf-XGFdUgqwL

When you are feeling anxious or ungrounded, practice Alternate Nostril Breathing, known as *Nadi Shodhana* in the yogic tradition. This will immediately help you feel calmer.

- Hold your right thumb over your right nostril and inhale deeply through your left nostril.
- At the peak of your inhalation, close off your left nostril with your fourth finger, lift your right thumb, and then exhale smoothly through your right nostril.
- After a full exhalation, inhale through the right nostril, closing it off with your right thumb at the peak of your inhalation, lift your fourth finger and exhale smoothly through your left nostril.
- Continue with this practice for 3 to 5 minutes, alternating your breathing through each nostril. Your breathing should be effortless, with your mind gently observing the inflow and outflow of breath.

Ocean's Breath

When you feel angry, irritated, or frustrated, try a cooling pranayama such as Ocean's Breath, or *Ujjayi* (pronounced *oo-jai*). This will immediately soothe and settle your mind.

- Take an inhalation that is slightly deeper than normal. With your mouth closed, exhale through your nose while constricting your throat muscles. If you are doing this correctly, you should sound like waves on the ocean.
- Another way to get the hang of this practice is to try exhaling the sound "*haaaaah*" with your mouth open. Now make a similar sound with your mouth closed, feeling the outflow of air through your nasal passages.
- Once you have mastered this on the outflow, use the same method for the inflow breath, gently constricting your throat as you inhale.

Energizing Breath

When you are feeling blue or sluggish, try Energizing Breath or *Bhastrika.* This will give you an immediate surge of energy and invigorate your mind.

- Begin by relaxing your shoulders and take a few deep, full breaths from your abdomen.
- Now start exhaling forcefully through your nose, followed by forceful, deep inhalations at the rate of one second per cycle. Your breathing is entirely from your diaphragm, keeping your head, neck, shoulders, and chest relatively still while your belly moves in and out.
- Start by doing a round of ten breaths, then breathe naturally and notice the sensations in your body. After 15 to 30 seconds, begin the next round with 20 breaths. Finally, after pausing for another 30 seconds, complete a third round of 30 breaths. Beginners are advised to take a break between rounds.

Although Bhastrika is a safe practice, stay tuned in to your body during the process. If you feel light-headed or very uncomfortable, stop for a few moments before resuming in a less intense manner.

Contraindications: Do not practice Bhastrika if you are pregnant or have uncontrolled hypertension, epilepsy/seizures, panic disorder, hernia, gastric ulcer, glaucoma, or vertigo. Use caution if there is an underlying lung disease.

A regular daily practice of deep breathing is one of the best tools for improving your health and well-being. Performing one of these breath techniques twice daily for only three to five minutes can produce long-term benefits. You can also use them any time you are feeling stressed or notice that your breathing has become constricted. By training your body with a regular practice of deep breathing, you will begin to breathe

more effectively even without concentrating on it.

“Healing is every breath.” ~Thich Nhat Hanh

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Three Breathing Exercises

Andrew Weil, M.D.

from: http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/ART00521/three-breathing-exercises.html

"Practicing regular, mindful breathing can be calming and energizing and can even help with stress-related health problems ranging from panic attacks to digestive disorders." Andrew Weil, M.D.

Since breathing is something we can control and regulate, it is a useful tool for achieving a relaxed and clear state of mind. I recommend three breathing exercises to help relax and reduce stress: The Stimulating Breath, The 4-7-8 Breathing Exercise (also called the Relaxing Breath), and Breath Counting. Try each of these breathing teachniques and see how they affect your stress and anxiety levels.

Exercise 1:

The Stimulating Breath (also called the Bellows Breath)

The Stimulating Breath is adapted from yogic breathing techniques. Its aim is to raise vital energy and increase alertness.

- Inhale and exhale rapidly through your nose, keeping your mouth closed but relaxed. Your breaths in and out should be equal in duration, but as short as possible. This is a noisy breathing exercise.
- Try for three in-and-out breath cycles per second. This produces a quick movement of the diaphragm, suggesting a

bellows. Breathe normally after each cycle.

- Do not do for more than 15 seconds on your first try. Each time you practice the Stimulating Breath, you can increase your time by five seconds or so, until you reach a full minute.

If done properly, you may feel invigorated, comparable to the heightened awareness you feel after a good workout. You should feel the effort at the back of the neck, the diaphragm, the chest and the abdomen. Try this diaphragmatic breathing exercise the next time you need an energy boost and feel yourself reaching for a cup of coffee.

Watch a video of Dr. Weil demonstrating the Stimulating Breath.

Exercise 2:
The 4-7-8 (or Relaxing Breath) Exercise

This breathing exercise is utterly simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere. Although you can do the exercise in any position, sit with your back straight while learning the exercise. Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there through the entire exercise. You will be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue; try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four.

- Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count ofeight.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

Note that you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. The tip of your tongue stays in position the whole time. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation. The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Unlike tranquilizing drugs, which are often effective when you first take them but then lose their power over time, this exercise is subtle when you first try it but gains in power with repetition and practice. Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently. Do not do more than four breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to eight breaths. If you feel a little lightheaded when you first breathe this way, do not be concerned; it will pass.

Once you develop this technique by practicing it every day, it will be a very useful tool that you will always have with you. Use it whenever anything upsetting happens – before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep. This exercise cannot be recommended too highly. Everyone can benefit from it.

Exercise 3:

Breath Counting

If you want to get a feel for this challenging work, try your hand at breath counting, a deceptively simple technique much used in Zen practice.

Sit in a comfortable position with the spine straight and head inclined slightly forward. Gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then let the breath come naturally without trying to influence it. Ideally it will be quiet and slow, but depth and rhythm may vary.

- To begin the exercise, count “one” to yourself as you exhale.
- The next time you exhale, count “two,” and so on up to “five.”
- Then begin a new cycle, counting “one” on the next exhalation.

Never count higher than “five,” and count only when you exhale. You will know your attention has wandered when you find yourself up to “eight,” “12,” even “19.”

Try to do 10 minutes of this form of meditation.

Watch a video of Dr. Weil demonstrating Breath Counting.

THE SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS OF BREATHING

For Greater Health & Happiness

Breathing is the single most important act that we do every day.

We cannot go even 3 minutes without breathing.

However, we do not pay much attention to breathing, it simply happens automatically.

There is a lot more to the breath than we know. In particular, it is a powerful way to control the mind.

We intuitively know this: it is why we commonly use expressions like "take a deep breath" when people are anxious or angry is common.

Scientific research is showing that breathing may just be the secret to better health and a more peaceful and productive mind.

HOW THE BREATH HELPS YOU CONTROL YOUR MIND

Neither in school, at work or at home have we been taught how to deal with strong emotions like anger, anxiety or fear.

We can try to "talk ourselves" out of these states but think about how successful you are at talking yourself out of a state of rage or nervousness. It's hard!

Research shows that the breath, however, can help! Since it is so difficult "talk" our way out of our feelings, we can learn to "breathe" our way through them.

One study showed that different emotions are linked to different patterns of breath and that, conversely, changing the breath can change our emotions! In other words, breath is a secret to regulating and gaining control over our emotions! We can change how we feel using our breath.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT BREATHING PRACTICES ARE POWERFUL

- Decrease anxiety and depression
- Increase happiness and optimism
- Improve sleep
- Strengthen our ability to regulate emotions
- Improve trauma symptoms
- Reduce impulsivity, cravings & addictions.

Why? The breath is linked to our autonomic nervous system. Daily breathing practices activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is associated with resting and digesting i.e. a more peaceful mind and body.

Research shows that breathing practices also benefit the body:

- Decrease stress & regulate our body's level of cortisol, the stress hormone.
- Strengthen our immunity by altering genes responsible for stronger immunity.
- Reduce pain and activation of pain centers in the brain.

TRY THIS SIMPLE BREATHING PRACTICE AT HOME

Alternate Nostril Pranayama:
a gentle breathing exercise to calm and focus the mind.

1. Relax your left hand on your lap, palm facing the ceiling.
2. Place the index and middle finger of the right hand on the center of the eyebrow.
3. Place the thumb of your right hand on the right nostril, and your ring and pinky finger on the left nostril.
4. Take a deep breath in, close your right nostril with your thumb, and breathe out using the left nostril.
5. Take a deep breath with the left nostril, and then close it with your ring finger. After that, exhale it with your right finger.
6. After every inhale, switch sides. Breathe slowly and deeply.
7. Repeat the steps for 5-minutes, and notice the effect on your mind and body. (5X)
8. Can be done anytime, anywhere for a quick pick-me-up or recharge session!

SOME PLACES YOU CAN LEARN TO BREATHE BETTER

General Population:	For Teens & Schools:	For Vets:	In Prisons:
http://www.art-of-living.org/	http://www.search-inside-yourself.org/	http://www.projectwarrior.org/	http://www.prisonmindfulness.org/

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