The Gift of Breathing

If you are ready to finally manage stress, insomnia, weight loss, increase sustainable energy, rejuvenate your entire body this is the book for you

By ISABEL HARKINS

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What Controls your Breathing?

DISCLAIMER

This book is meant to increase your knowledge of breathing techniques and help you with breathing awareness, and the different modalities of breathing exercises.
Breathing can enhance your physical, mental and spiritual well-being.
The information here is designed to aid you to make informed choices in PRANAYAM Breath use and the practices of it. It is not intended as substitute for medical treatment. You should consult your doctor before you attempt any exercises described in this book. You have the control the practices and what is good for you, we wish to share the knowledge and experiences we have had and scientific research links, so you can make the ideal choices for your specific needs.
Enjoy and share with others so they can also benefit from it.

Chapter 1

"When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace"

The Mechanics of Breathing

To breathes is to live, and without breath there is no life. Not only do the animals depend upon breath for life and health, but all forms of animal and plantlike depend upon the air for continued existence.
Breathing is considered the most important of all the functions of the body, due to the fact that all other functions depend upon it. Oxygen is the most essential natural resource required by our cells. We can go without food for up to 40 days and without water for 3 days, yet we can die after just a few minutes of not breathing. Man is not only dependent upon the breath for life but he is largely dependent upon correct habits of breathing for long lasting vitality and freedom from illness.
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.

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"Breathe deeply, until sweet air extinguishes the burn of fear"

These signals ensure your breathing muscles, contract (tighten) and relax regularly. This function allows the breathing to happen automatically, without you being aware. It is pretty amazing don't you think, aside from all 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 running, depression etc,.
Your breathing will change depending on how active you are and the condition of the air around you. Is a fact that, 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.

Chapter 1

“Inhale the future, exhale the past”

From a purely physical point of view, breath equals life. With that in mind, it's easy to see why so many people are so frustrated at their inability to breathe well.
Breathing is a natural thing: breathe in, breathe out…not much to it, right? Well, guess what: there actually is a wrong and right way to get oxygen into your system.

Use Your Nose

1-There are two ways to breathe—through your mouth and your nose, but the nostrils filter, warm and humidify air in a way that the mouth cannot.

"At times, breathing through your mouth is necessary (increased physical activity, sinus congestion) but breathing in through your nose is best breathing through the mouth depletes intake of oxygen to the breain and makes the body acid.

Chapter 1

“Take a deep breath… and allow the radiant abundance of the universe to flow into the depth of your being”

2. **And Your Belly**

Humans are "belly breathers," and just above your stomach is a major muscle in the respiration process, the diaphragm. Proper breathing starts in the nose and then moves to the stomach as your diaphragm contracts, the belly expands and your lungs fill with air. "It is the most efficient way to breathe, as it pulls down on the lungs, creating negative pressure in the chest, resulting in air flowing into your lungs."
It releases tension in the organs and the heart gets a massage also.
A lot of people tend to overthink breathing, but it's important to remember that your body is built for it. Your respiratory systems know exactly when to tell you to change your depth of breathing, depending on your activity.
It is of great importance to be aware how we are breathing by checking in through the day just gently paying attention to the breath, specially when we are rushing around or stressed.

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“Breathing is the first act of life and the last one”

"Along with the kidneys, the lungs keep the blood's pH in a very tight range to allow all body functions to occur,”

"There are receptors in our body that constantly monitor the blood's oxygen and pH levels. It automatically sends signals to our brain to tell us how often and how deep to breathe."

An important property of blood is its degree of acidity or alkalinity. The acidity or alkalinity of any solution, including blood, is indicated on the pH scale. The pH scale, ranges from 0 (strongly acidic) to 14 (strongly basic or alkaline). A pH of 7.0, in the middle of this scale, is neutral. Blood is normally slightly basic, with a normal pH range of about 7.35 to 7.45. Usually the body maintains the pH of blood close to 7.40.

Chapter 1

"When the breath is unsteady, all is unsteady; when the breath is still; all is still."

Stimulate Brain Growth

When controlled breathing is used, it can increase the size of the brain. Awareness that involves focusing attention on the breath has the capacity to increase cortical thickness, acording to a Harvard study.

Lower Stress Levels

If your breathing is shallow, your body is probably in "flight or fight" mode. Taking a minute or two to sit quietly and focus on your breath it will shift you out of the Sympathetic nervous system, in a state of"relax and receive"

Improve Heart Rate Variability

Low heart rate variability (the interval of the time between heartbeats) is not desirable. Studies have found that deep breathing practices can improve heart rate in healthy test subjects

Change your Breathing, Change your life.

Chapter 1

“To control the breathing is to control the mind.”

The body uses different mechanisms to control the blood's acid-base balance. These mechanisms involve the

Lungs

Kidneys

Buffer systems

Role of the lungs

One mechanism the body uses to control blood pH involves the release of carbon dioxide from the lungs.
Carbon dioxide, which is mildly acidic, is a waste product of the processing (metabolism) of oxygen and nutrients (which all cells need) and, as such, is constantly produced by cells.

“"Breathing is the essence of life, breathe deeply, live fully.”

It then passes from the cells into the blood. The blood carries carbon dioxide to the lungs, where it is exhaled. As carbon dioxide accumulates in the blood, the pH of the blood decreases (acidity increases)
Shallow breathing from chest only, without a deep exhale is a great cause of this and also breathing through the mouth.

The brain regulates the amount of carbon dioxide that is exhaled by controlling the speed and depth of breathing (ventilation). The amount of carbon dioxide exhaled, and consequently the pH of the blood, increases as breathing becomes faster and deeper. By adjusting the speed and depth of breathing, the brain and lungs are able to regulate the blood pH minute by minute.

Chapter 1

"I wake up every day and I think,
'I'm breathing! It's a good day.'"

Role of the kidneys

The kidneys are able to affect blood pH by excreting excess acids or bases. The kidneys have some ability to alter the amount of acid or base that is excreted, but because the kidneys make these adjustments more slowly than the lungs do, this compensation generally takes several days.
So as you can see the importance of correct deep breathing is crucial to good health.
When your body is in an alkaline state, your chances of getting sick with chronic diseases decrease.
If your body is more often in an acidic state than a neutral one, your risk of contracting chronic illnesses, weight gain, teeth and gum problems, pain and inflammation increases.

Chapter 1

“Breath is the bridge which connects life to consciousness

Diaphragmatic breathing (also referred to as "slow abdominal breathing") is something you can do anytime and anywhere to instantly stimulate your vagus nerve and lower stress responses associated with "fight-or-flight" mechanisms. Deep breathing also improves heart rate variability

(HRV), which is the measurement of variations within beat-to-beat intervals.

" The nine vagal maneuvers featured in each of these blog posts are designed to help you stimulate your vagus nerve—which can reduce stress, anxiety, anger, and inflammation by activating the "relaxation response" of your parasympathetic nervous system.

Chapter 1

Whenever your mind becomes scattered, use your breath as the means to take hold of your mind again."

When you don't breathe in a deep manner or take shallow breaths, more carbon dioxide is trapped in your blood, which makes your system highly acidic. Shallow breathing also means that your stress, which makes you produce more cortisol (stress) hormones, which leaves you with more toxins in your blood making your body more acidic. Just by taking five deep breathes, you put more oxygen in your system, that helps clean your system.
The less the carbon dioxide in our system, the less acidic is your body.

Focusing on the breath

Choosing one focal point is very good for the mind. Behavioral and psychological sciences have shown that we can truly only focus on one thing at a time. Once our focus is split, performance and quality immediately start to drop.

The more things we focus on, the lower our quality falls.
This is one reason that it is beneficial to practice focusing on one thing at a time, such as the breath… the thing that is always with you, always there for you.

Chapter 1

"The Greatest Luxury of Life is PeacefulBreathing"

Heralded by Harvard Medical School and International Journal of Yoga as a fundamental tool for maintaining and improving mental health, correct breathing has been scientifically proven to quickly calm anxiety, release stress, balance the autonomic nervous system and boost immunity.

Benefits of Deep Breathing

Breathe in. Breathe out. We do this all day, every day without a thought. Ask yourself this- when was the last time you took a deep breath? Probably not as frequently as you think. I fell that I can say with certainty that only a few times a day. But did you know that deep breathing is one of our easiest, most convenient and natural tools to address issues like stress and anxiety, reduce pain, high blood pressure and even aide in digestion?

Chapter 1

“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.”

So why should you breath deeply? Simply put- extra oxygen, eliminate carbon Dioxide, reset the nervous system, activate the Vagus Nerve to mention a few benefits, does wonders for the body and mind.
It cleanses, opens and soothes different parts of our being and is overall something extremely beneficial that we can all do.

Here are a few benefits to deep breathing:

1) Decreases stress, increases inner peace. When you become stressed or anxious, we have many health consequences. By taking deep breaths, your heart rate slows, more oxygen enters our blood stream and ultimately communicates with the brain to relax. Deep breathing also increases your endorphins, the feel good helper.
2) Is research that confirms it can relieve pain. The release of endorphins, which not only helps create a great happy feeling, but also aids with inflammation, pain, and overall feeling of wellbeing .

Being aware of your breath forces you into the present moment - the key to all inner transformation.

4) Research has confirmed that it helps immunity. When your blood is fully oxygenated, it carries and absorbs nutrients and vitamins more efficiently. Essentially, more oxygen in the blood, the chances for health challenges manifest in your system are few.
5) Increases energy. The more oxygen that is in the blood, the better our body functions. It also improves our stamina and semi of wellbeing.
6) Lowers blood pressure. As your muscles relax, this allows your blood vessels to dilate, which improves circulation and lowers blood pressure. Deep breathing also slows and regulates the heart rate, which also helps with lowering your blood pressure.
7) Improves digestion. The more you breathe deep, the more healthier blood flow you will produce, which in turn promotes your organs to function more effectively, and that includes your digestive system.
8) Helps support correct posture. Next time you breathe in, notice that you simultaneously lengthen and straighten your spine. In order to take a deep breath in, your lungs take up maximum space, your diaphragm pulls down, so in turn your torso straightens in order for this to be possible.

Chapter 1

"Whenever you are conscious of the breath, you are absolutely present."

Now, deep breathing is something that the body does not do automatically, so just like learning any new skill, it takes practice! Try to incorporate one breathing exercise each day.
Unlike other bodily functions, the breath is easily used to communicate between body systems, which gives us an excellent tool to help facilitate positive change. It is the only bodily function that we do both voluntarily and involuntarily. We can consciously use breathing to influence the involuntary (sympathetic nervous system) that regulates blood pressure, heart rate, circulation, digestion and many other bodily functions. Breathing exercises can act as a bridge into those functions of the body, which we generally do not have conscious control.
During times of emotional stress our sympathetic nervous system is stimulated and effects a number of physical responses. Our heart rate rises, we perspire, our muscles tense and our breathing becomes rapid and shallow. If this process happens over a long period of time, the sympathetic nervous system becomes over stimulated leading to an imbalance that can effect our physical health resulting in inflammation, high blood pressure and muscle pain to name a few.

Chapter 1

“ No one canoe truly successfully the art of meditation without going through the door of Breathing”

Try to bring awareness into your breath through out the day, if you start doing it little by little it will get invaded in your body and brain and you will be more conscious about it, it worked for me and many of my students and clients.
I learned to be aware of my breath and the relationship with my emotions, thoughts, when I have to speak for a long period of time, and decently if I am upset or stressed in any way.
Make an effort to choose a breathing exercise that you find it suit you, and practice it for a few minutes a day perhaps upon awakening, on a break at work in your car when you are stoped, before bed any time really.
When you were a child and were totally absorbed in an activity. Time seemed to stop. You were absolutely present and at one with the moment.
All that presence changed with programing and demands from people and circumstances in daily demands.
This is a skill that can be rediscovered and you can start right now, breath is very successful tool at that.

Chapter 1

‘Slow Breathing is like and Anchor in the Midst of an Emotional Storm”

You can try it now:

Breath and become aware of the flow of the breath coming in and out of your nostrils the coolness of the breath coming in and the warmth of it going out, notice the sound of it, gather your attention inwards.
Fell the breath in your heart and feel grateful for being able to breath, so many people can’t what a gift fill your heart with the breath of gratitude.
Now bring your breath to your upper belly, middle belly, and lower belly, to your entire legs, exhale slowly and longer than the inhale pause for a count of one and inhale again without forcing it jus slow and deep.

Chapter 1

“You are the Sky everything else is the weather”

Just by pausing to just be and to feel in our daily life, we become more center, happy, fulfilled , a live and more meaningful, just by being present, and we automatically calm the nervous system all the organs and the brain, we become more clear and assertive about what we really want and we can shed the unimportant things that no longer work for us.
We become active truly a live simply by being, instead of always doing, and overthinking and judging our selves and others.
Transformation takes will and repetition, but it sure pays off I can testify to that
This book is designed to give you simple, easy access to tools to begin your path and to explore the breath and how it works for you.
It is a huge selection of breathing to choose from, I haven chosen the ones that I know to be safe, simple and effective.
Please make sure that you do what is comfortable and feels right to you, no super hero here, the practices are not to replace therapies or medication and less your health practitioner says so, we are sharing information not prescribing or replacing Professional advise.

Chapter 1

"If You want to conquer the anxiety of life, Live in the moment Live in The Breath"

Respiration

The average adult at rest inhales and exhales about sixteen times per minute when in health. Each time, half a liter (about a pint) of air is drawn in and expelled. At the end of a normal exhalation, one may force out an additional liter and a half of air, leaving about an additional liter in the lungs which cannot be forced out. After normal inhalation, one may inhale an additional one and a half liters. As you see it is possible to increase the amount of air inhaled and exhaled during each breath from half a liter to three and a half liters.

Not all of the air breathed can be used by the body because some must remain to fill the nose or mouth, sinuses, larynx, trachea, bronchi and their larger branches. This is called "dead air" in contrast with "alveolar air" which participates in the gas exchange. The shallower the breathing, the larger becomes the percentage of dead air in each breath. But also, in shallow breathing, more impurities are retained in our system.

Chapter 1

"For Breath is life, and if you breathe well you will live long on this heart"

Shallow breathing, on the other hand, means that the waste material in the body is not burnt up, and the result is fatigue, or a lack of zest for living. The blood, filled with toxins, gets heavy, lazy and causes poor circulation.
When your personal rhythm is disturbed, it harms you physically, mentally and emotionally. Nervousness is simply disturbed breathing rhythm. A tense person never has the same amount of courage as the relaxed one, they stop themselves before they take any action and they also hold their breath and breathe from the top of their chest. In the other hand the person whose breathing rhythm has the longest pause is the one least likely to break down under the strain of action.
The art of complete breathing is fundamental to the task of acquiring relaxation. It releases the nerve centers from the excessive tension that afflicts them.

Chapter 1

“ Deep Breathing is like Little Notes to your Body.”

Most breathing exercises have the effect of increasing both the amount and percentage of air which enters actively into the purifying gaseous exchange processes.

The air inhaled normally consists of about 79% nitrogen, about 20% to 21% oxygen, about 0.04% carbon dioxide, with traces of other gases and water vapor. Exhaled air often consists of about 79% nitrogen, about 16% oxygen, about 4% carbon dioxide, with traces of other gases and water vapor. Since the nitrogen content remains approximately the same the most significant change during the breathing process is an exchange of about 4% oxygen for about 4% carbon dioxide.

Once in the lungs, oxygen is moved into the bloodstream. Blood carries the oxygen through the body to where it is needed.

Red blood cells collect carbon dioxide from the body’s cells and transports it back to the lungs.

An exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide takes place in the alveoli, small structures within the lungs. The carbon dioxide, a waste gas, is exhaled and the cycle begins again with the next breath.

Chapter 1

" Some times the most productive thing you can do is breathe"

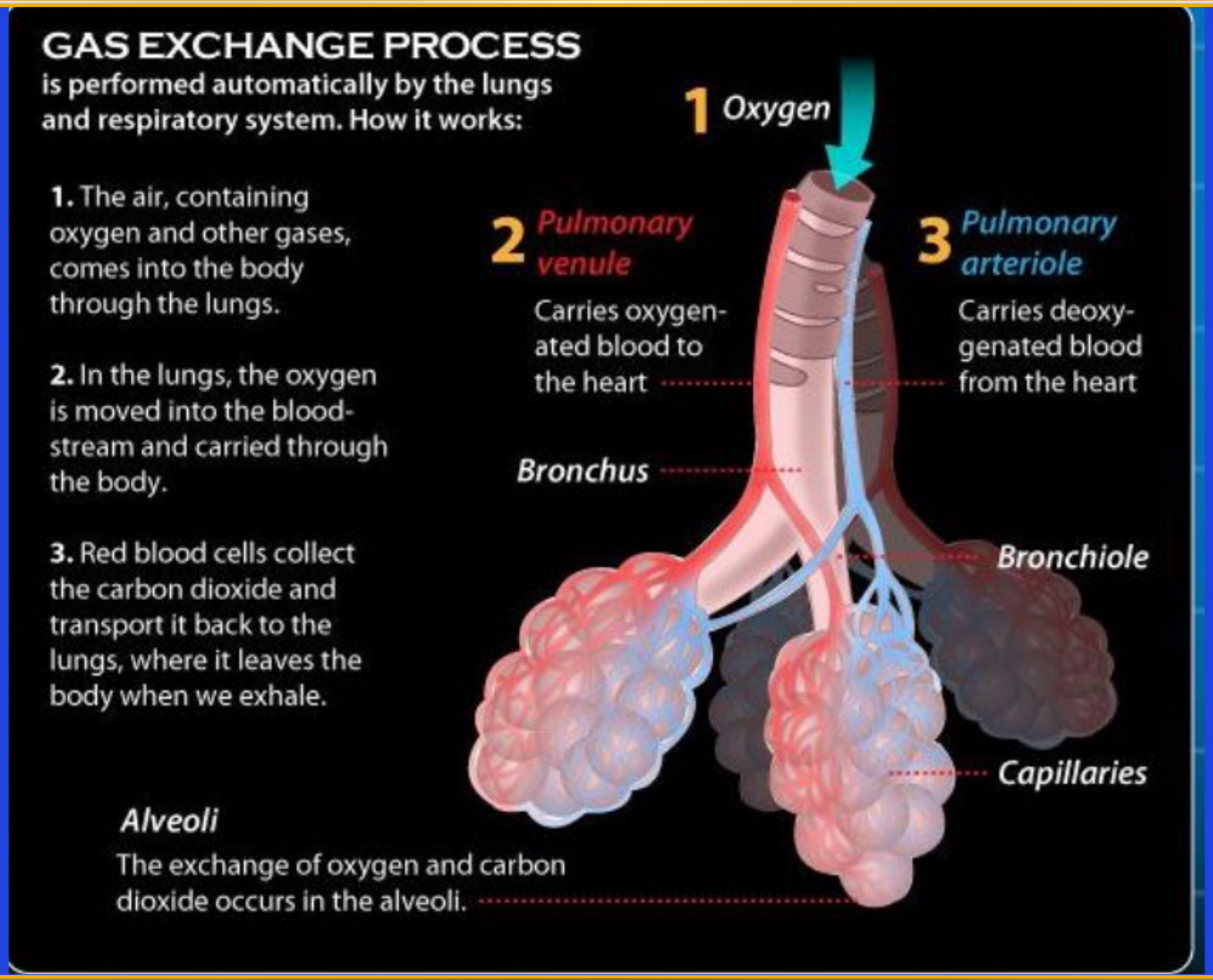
Diaphragmatic breathing (also referred to as "slow abdominal breathing") is something you can do anytime and anywhere to instantly stimulate your vagus nerve and lower stress responses associated with "fight-or-flight" mechanisms. Deep breathing also improves heart rate variability

For millennia, yogis and sages from Eastern cultures have understood the importance of diaphragmatic breathing. Since the 1970s, the trailblazing efforts of mind-body thought leaders such as Herbert Benson and Jon Kabat-Zinn have popularized the paramount importance of deep breathing as a central component of maintaining a healthy physiological balance (homeostasis) within your autonomic nervous system, which is widely accepted by "Western medicine" practitioners today.

In 2010, an international study reaffirmed this timeless wisdom by showing that slow abdominal breathing reduced the "fight-or-flight" response of the sympathetic nervous system and could enhance vagal activity. These findings were published in The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.

Chapter 2

"Deep. relaxed breathing sends a message to the brain that we are safe"



Chapter 2

"Breathe and let go of what no longer serves you."

Oxygenation

As the percentage of oxygen exchanged for carbon dioxide remains the same, the total amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide exchanged per minute tends to increase as a greater air volume is breathed. By strenuous exercise, we increase the volume of breathing to ten times the resting level. When muscular exercise increases, the body needs more oxygen. Part of the aim of both deep breathing exercises and posture movements and rests is to "purify" (increase the ratio of oxygen to carbon dioxide) the blood and the body parts through which blood circulates.

Chapter 2

“Just Breath you will never live this moment again”

The interchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide is possible because of the structure of the cells joining the alveoli and the capillaries and the laws and processes of gas exchange. The movement of carbon dioxide from the blood to the alveoli takes place by diffusion. In diffusion, the carbon dioxide moves from the rich side to the lean side. When the blood contains more carbon dioxide than the air, the carbon dioxide will diffuse from the blood to the air. If, on the other hand, the air is rich in carbon dioxide, the diffusion of carbon dioxide from the blood to the air is inhibited. In some extreme cases the carbon dioxide may even diffuse or flow from the air into the blood.

Chapter 2

“ I breathe in my courage and I exhale my fears”

Regulation

A group of nerve cells in the medulla, the respiratory center of the brain, controls the contractions of muscles used in breathing. Inhalation takes place when the nerve cells of this group send impulses through motor nerves to respiratory muscles. When there is an interruption in the processes, it prevents these cells from sending impulses, inhalation ceases and exhalation occurs. Apparently we do not use muscular energy and force to expel air but merely stop inhaling; then exhaling takes place automatically, without muscular effort. Since all respiratory muscles contract in harmony, some organizing process in the brain coordinates their movements. Apparently the respiratory center cells function much like the pacemaker tissue of the heart, since they seem to induce rhythmical patterns of respiration without outside help, even though they are sensitive to various influences which modify their action.

In addition to the involuntary regulation and regularization of breathing patterns, many involuntary reflexes are present, such as those noticeable in choking, sneezing, coughing, and swallowing. It is basically impossible to breathe while swallowing food. Other reflexes may be noted, such as sudden holding of breath when you sniff harsh chemicals. If your air supply has been cut off, you automatically gasp for breath.

Chapter 2

“Breathing is the essence of life.
Breathe deeply and live fully. “

These are voluntary controls of breathing. For example, you can deliberately take a deeper breath or stop breathing momentarily. We may deliberately run for such a distance that we get our "second wind," and we proceed to breathe more easily even though exercising strenuously.
Part of the significance of distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary control of breathing is that yogic exercises aim first at shifting unhealthy involuntary patterns voluntarily and then establishing more healthy patterns.
Part of the significance of distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary control of breathing is that yogic exercises aim first at shifting unhealthy involuntary patterns voluntarily and then establishing more healthy patterns.
Whereas nervous tension produces a

Chapter 2

“Breathe- let go-relax
Give your stress wings and let it
fly away”

What Happens When You Breathe?

Breathing In (Inhalation)

When you breathe in, or inhale, your diaphragm contracts (tightens) and moves downward. This action 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 the different amounts of air inhaled. The lungs contract to pull your rib cage both upward and outward when you inhale.
As your lungs expand, air is usually 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).

Chapter 2

“Breathe in breath out. No fear no doubt.”

Breathing Out (Exhalation)

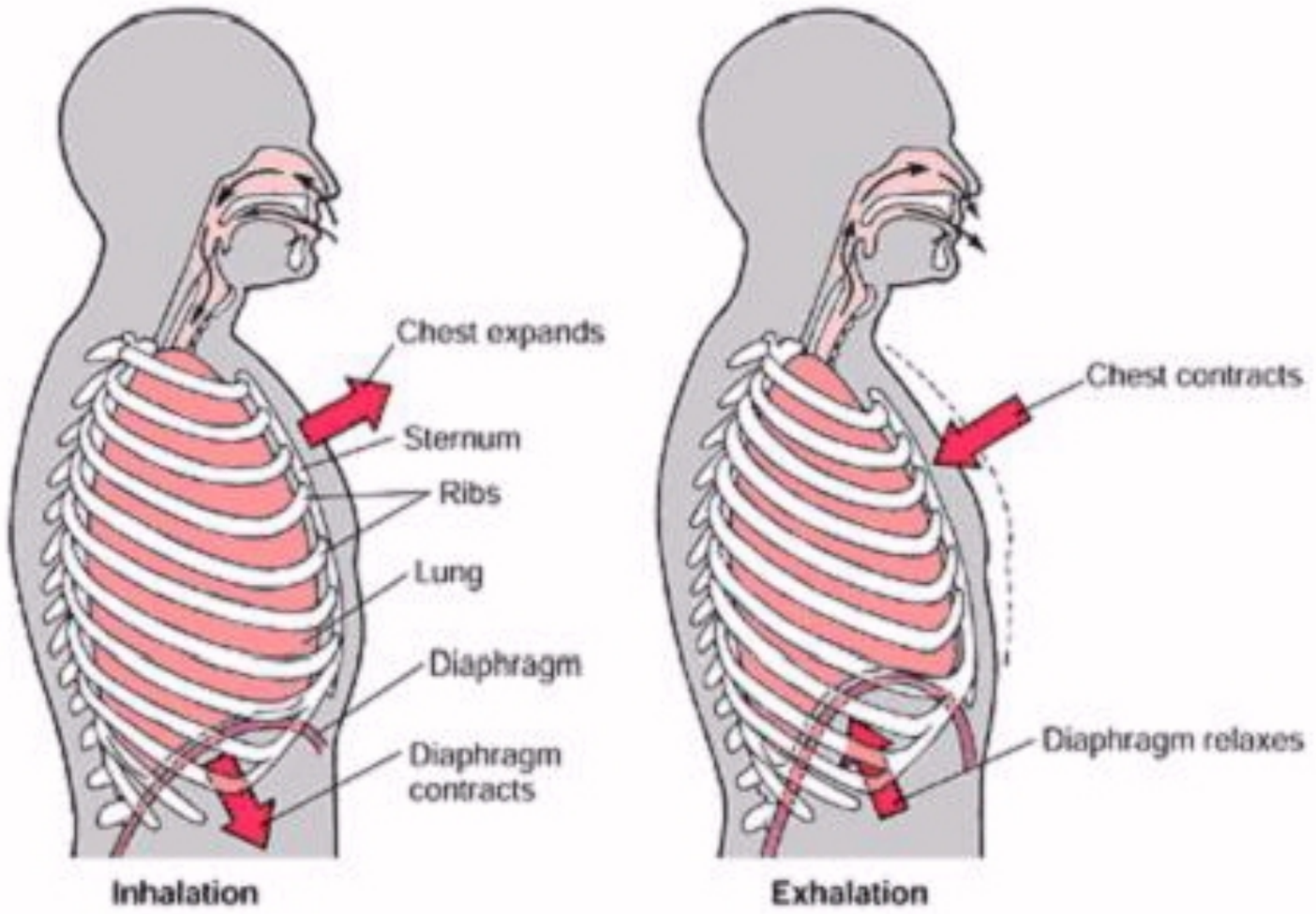
When you breathe out, or exhale, your diaphragm relaxes and moves upward into the chest cavity. As we breathe out the intercostal muscles between the ribs also relax to reduce the space in the chest cavity.e
As the space in the chest cavity gets smaller, air rich in carbon dioxide is forced out of your lungs and windpipe, and then out of your nose or mouth as we exhale.
Breathing out requires no effort from your body unless you have a lung disease or are doing physical activity that consciously promotes exhalation. 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.

Chapter 2

"When you want to succeed as bas as you want to breathe then you will be successful"

Diaphragm's Role in Breathing

When the diaphragm contracts, the chest cavity enlarges, reducing the pressure inside. To equalize the pressure, air rushes into the lungs. When the diaphragm relaxes, the elasticity of the lungs and chest wall pushes air out of the lungs.



Chapter 2

“Breathe, this is just a chapter. It’s not your whole story”

Breathing Out (Exhalation)

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Chapter 2

“Breathe the quieter you become the more you can hear”

This respiratory discipline in turn could explain the physical and mental benefits of contemplative activities through changes in autonomic balance. We propose a neurophysiological model that explains how these specific respiration styles could operate, by stimulating the vagal nerve: respiratory vagal nerve stimulation (rVNS). The vagal nerve, as a proponent of the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), is the prime candidate in explaining the effects of contemplative practices on health, mental health and cognition.

Chapter 3

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

The Functions of the Vagus Nerve

The vagus nerve represents the main component of the parasympathetic nervous system, which oversees a vast array of crucial bodily functions, including control of mood, immune response, digestion, and heart rate. It establishes one of the connections between the brain and the gastrointestinal tract and sends information about the state of the inner organs to the brain via affe rent fibers. Here we are sharing various functions of the vagus nerve.

Is Scientific evidence that vagus nerve stimulation is a promising add-on treatment for treatment-refractory depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and inflammatory bowel disease among other benefits.

Chapter 3

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

The Vagus Nerve: Your Body's Communication Superhighway

The vagus nerve starts to exit from the medulla oblongata in the groove between the olive and the inferior cerebellar peduncle, leaving the skull through the middle compartment of the jugular foramen.
In the neck, the vagus nerve provides innervation to most of the muscles of the pharynx and larynx, which are responsible for swallowing and vocalization. In the thorax, it provides the main parasympathetic supply to the heart and stimulates a reduction in the heart rate.
In the intestines, the vagus nerve regulates the contraction of smooth muscles and glandular secretion.

Chapter 3

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

The vagus is the 10th of 12 cranial nerves that extend directly from the brain, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica. Although we refer to the vagus nerve as singular, it's actually a pair of nerves that emerge from the left and right side of the medulla oblongata portion of the brain stem. The nerve gets its name from the Latin word “Wandering”, according to Merriam-Webster, which is appropriate, as the vagus nerve is the largest and most widely branching cranial nerve.

By wandering and branching throughout the body, the vagus nerve provides the primary control for the nervous system's parasympathetic division: the rest-and-digest counterpoint to the sympathetic nervous system's fight-or-flight response. When the body is not under stress, the vagus nerve sends commands that slow heart and breathing rates and increase digestion. In times of stress, control shifts to the sympathetic system, which produces the opposite effect.

Chapter 3

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Large divisions of the vagus nerve extend to the digestive system. About 10% to 20% of the vagus nerve cells that connect with the digestive system send commands from the brain to control muscles that move food through the gut, according to the textbook "Nerves and Nerve Injuries Volume 1" (Academic Press, 2015). The movement of those muscles is then controlled by a separate nervous system embedded within the walls of the digestive system.
In recent decades, many researchers have found that this brain-gut axis has another counterpart — the bacteria that live inside the intestines. This microbiome communicates with the brain through the vagus nerve, affecting not just food intake but also mood and inflammation response, according to a 2014 review published in the journal Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology

Chapter 3

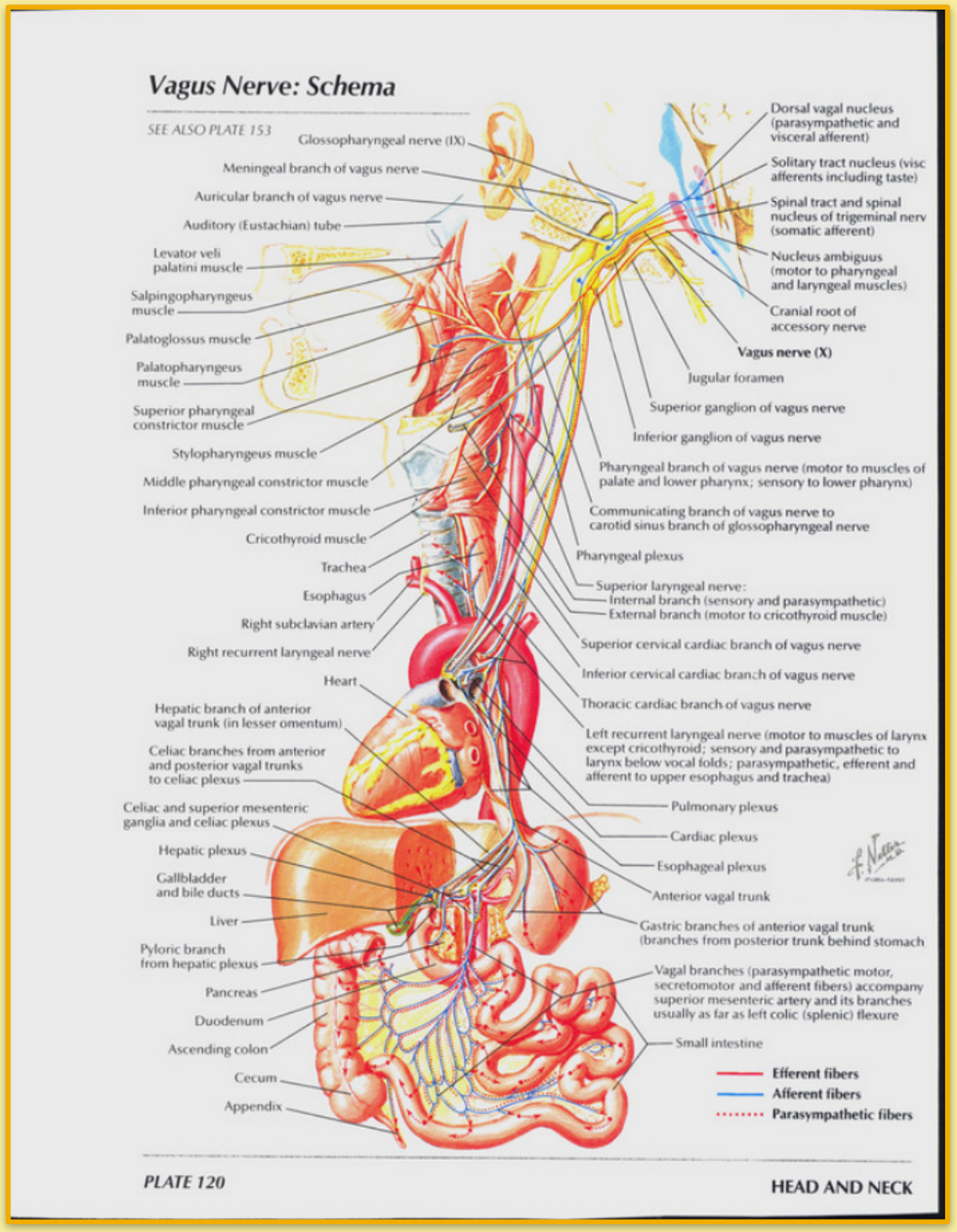
When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Vagus Nerve Stimulation and The Roll of the Breath

The vagus nerve is an important part of the parasympathetic nervous system, connecting many organs, such as the brain, heart, liver, and gut. Having a ”low vagal tone” means that the vagus nerve is impaired in its functioning— it is well-known cause of stress by science. This can subsequently lead to conditions such as anxiety, depression, Digestive problems, and general inflammation. Stimulating the vagus nerve can increase vagal tone, and thus have a significant positive effect on the functioning of your body.

Chapter 3

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”



Vagus cranial Nerve

Courtesy of AT of Anatomy- Weebly

Chapter 3

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

NATURAL WAYS OF VAGUS NERVE STIMULATION

Here we will explain some natural ways for indirectly stimulating the vagus nerve.
Exposing your body to acute cold conditions, such as taking a cold shower or splashing cold water on your face, placing a cold pack infant of the ears on both sides of the face increases stimulation of the vagus nerve. While your body adjusts to the cold, sympathetic activity declines, while parasympathetic activity increases.

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Deep breathing. You can indirectly stimulate the vagus nerve by taking deep, deliberate breaths from your belly. Deep Belly breathing activates specific neurons that detect blood pressure. These neurons signal to the vagus nerve that blood pressure is becoming too high, and the vagus nerve in turn responds by lowering your heart rate.

Meditation. Meditating is another great way to increase parasympathetic activity. It will bring your body in a state of calm, telling your vagus nerve that there is no need for a fight-or-flight response, thereby increasing vagal tone.

Singing. You can also use singing, humming, and gargling to activate your vocal cords and the muscles in the back of your throat, which are connected to the vagus nerve. Incorporating these activities into your daily routine can help increase your vagal tone.

Chapter 4

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Introduction to Pranayama

Prana (also known as Prana Vayu), or life force, is the Sanskrit word for the energy that permeates everything in the universe.

Pranayama means to increase the quantity of Prana in the body. Pranyama is the method of breathing in a rhythmic way and correct fashion. While inhaling, breathe in through the nostrils, the stomach at the same time should come outside (expand) and while breathing out the stomach should go inside. This is the correct way of breathing. Prana meaning life force (noted particularly as the breath), and either Ayama (to restrain or control the Prana, implying a set of breathing techniques where the breath is intentionally altered in order to produce specific results) or the negative form ayāma, meaning to extend or draw out (as in extension of the life force).

Chapter 4

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

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.
Prana comes into the body from the food we eat, the air we breathe, and from absorbing the energies of the earth. Prana travels through thousands of tiny channels called Nadis to every cell in the body.
Relative to our physical existence, Prana or vital energy is a modification of the air element, deriving primarily from the oxygen we breathe. On a subtle level, the air element corresponds to the sense of touch; through touch we feel alive and are able to transmit our life-force to others.

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"When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace"

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, frozen or any kind of processed food (it really relates to life force). Similarly, vegetarian foods are 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?

The whole body works with Prana. The Human body derives this Prana through breath. As is a well known fact breath and life are considered synonymous. Breath is intimately connected with body and mind. It is the bridge allowing access to the nervous system, mind and vital energy (Prana shakti). Breath, body and mind are all energized by the vital life energy.

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This vital energy is itself activated by the subtle body (Taijasya Sarira). At the ultimate end is soul or consciousness. Russian scientists, Mr. Acnnyon and Mrs. Valentina Kirlian developed this technique of photographing this energy and it can be seen by anyone in photographs and also electron microscopes.
In a single day we breathe about 2300 times. Average volume of air taken in a single breath ranges from a half to a liter with proper attention this volume can be increased up to 4 to 5 liters. We can increase the capacity of breathing in five times the oxygen that we normally breathe and breathing out carbon-dioxide much faster. However we can train ourselves to breathe more slowly and deeply. The rate can easily be reduced from four to five breaths per minutes. Slower breath rate results in reduction of wear and tear in the entire body. less work for the heart and the entire system, it reduces high blood pressure and quieter nerves among other benefits.

Pranayama is best performed on empty stomach

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Thousands of years ago, It was discovered that the quantity and quality of Prana and the way it flows through the Nadis (subtle energy channels) is a great way to determine one’s state of mind. When we are stressed we hold our breath and breathe from the top of our chest instead of our belly. Due to lack of awareness about this fact, the energy channels in the average person may be partially blocked, making the flow of Prana broken and inefficient. This results in increased worry, fear, uncertainty, conflict, tension and other negative emotions.When the Prana level is high it flows continuously, smooth and steady. By this action the mind is calm, positive, enthusiastic and our state is relaxed.

It is through the power of Prana that the ear hears, the eye sees, the skin feels, the tongue tastes, the nose smells and the brain and the intellect perform their functions. Whatever you behold in this sense-world, whatever moves or works has life, is the expression or manifestation of Prana.

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The five types of prana in the body are Prana, Apana, Udana, Samana and Vyana.

Prana is force, magnetism and electricity.
That which causes the motion of breath in lungs, is Prana.
It is Prana that pumps the blood from the heart into the arteries and blood vessels. Through Prana digestion, excretion and secretion take place. Prana aids to digests the food, turns it into lymphatic fluid and blood, this processes sends it into the brain.

Use of Prana

Prana is expanded by thinking, willing, acting, moving, talking, writing, creating, being in nature etc. A healthy strong person has an abundance of Prana (or nerve-force or vitality). It is supplied by food, water, air, solar energy, etc. The supply of Prana is taken up by the nervous system. The Prana in the air is absorbed by breathing. The excess is stored in the brain and nerve centers in the form of spiritual energy.

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Prana is the energy in the upper part of the body, in the region above the heart. If Prana is too high or is imbalanced you cannot sleep.

Apana Vayu is the energy in the lower part of the body. If Apana is too high, then you feel lethargic, sleepy, and dull.

Samana Vayu is in the stomach region, it aids digestion.

Udana Vayu is in the upper chest and throat region, it is responsible for emotions. If Udana Vayu is imbalanced, you have no emotions, you become hard and disconnected or you become to mushy-mushy and non present.

Vyana is all over the body, it is responsible for movements in the joints, the circulation in the body. If Vyana Prana is disturbed, then the circulatory system is disturbed, your joints are not flexible, there are aches and pains.

There are 172,000 nadis or prana channels which function in our body.

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“When the breath wanders, the mind is unsteady, But when the breath is still, so is the mind still.

Difference between Pranayama and breathing exercises

In non conscious normal respiration the air is taken in through the nostrils without any special effort, of sound or aware movement of the nose or chest. In short, it is done unconsciously. We are not even aware of air traveling through our nostrils, down the nasal and oral parts of the pharynx, of its reaching the larynx and then the trachea and the lungs that is quite a process don’t you think?.

In general, most of us are unaware of how the breathing process works. Pranayama, as traditionally conceived, involves much more than merely breathing for relaxation. Pranayama is a term with a wide amount of meanings. Patanjali defines pranayama as "the regulation of the incoming and outgoing flow of breath with retention. Pranayama also denotes cosmic power, or the power of the entire universe which manifests itself as conscious living, through the action of breathing.

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Pranayama is the conscious awareness of breath. The term is derived from Sanskrit, Prana means breath, respiration, vitality or energy. Ayama means expansion or stretching. Thus, Pranayama connotes extension and control of breath. Proper rhythmic, slow and deep breathing, strengthens the respiratory system, soothes the nervous system and increases concentration among many other benefits. According to Yoga, the breath connects the Body, Mind, and Spirit. Mostly we use only a fraction of our lung capacity as we do shallow breathing. We barely expand the ribcage, shoulders are often hunched and have painful tension in the upper part of back and neck due to which we suffer lack of oxygen which makes us breathless, anxious and tired. So, keep both shoulder blades as close as possible without strain and exhale gently and fully pause, then inhale with a deep, slow, gentle breath until the lungs are comfortably filled. Then breath out slowly through the nose, without changing the position of shoulder blades. Repeat this cycle many times. By doing this, the brain gets stimulated and ease nerve tension by providing the fuller supply of oxygen

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Types of Breathing

Clavicular Breathing: (Sectional Breathing): It is shallow breathing in which the abdomen is completely controlled, and breathing is performed by forcing the air into the uppermost region of the lungs. The shoulders and collar bones are raised while the abdomen is contracted during inhalation.

Thoracic: (Chest Breathing): Breathing takes place by expanding and contracting the chest only, while the abdomen is kept under control. The middle lobes of the lungs are fully activated through this breathing.

Abdominal Breathing: Deep abdominal breathing brings air to the lowest and largest part of lungs. Breathing is slow and deep such that diaphragm is used properly.

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A full yogic breath combines all three, beginning with abdomen and continuing the inhalation through the thoracic and clavicular area. The abdomen should expand outward on inhalation and contract on exhalation. To get the feeling of this motion, while sitting in any meditative posture preferably Vajrasana, place the hands on the abdomen close to each other. Exhale slowly inhale through the nostrils taking the hands away from each other so that the abdomen bulges. Hold the breath for a second. Then slowly exhale so that the abdomen retracts bringing the hands closer. Hold the breath for a second. Repeat the breathing cycle five times, preferably in the ratio 4:2:8:2. Breathing should be deep, slow and rhythmic.

The lower sections of the lungs increase with air flow. Rhythmic movement of the diaphragm massages the abdomen gently and enables the organs to function effectively.

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Breathing should be slow and rhythmic, eyes should be close to control the mind and body.

It has three aspects

(1) Poorka (Inhalation) (2) Kumbhaka (Retention) (3) Rechaka (Exhalation).

Types of Pranayama:

- **Ujjayi Pranayama (victorious breath)**
- **Anulom Vilom (alternate breathing)**
- **Brahamari Pranayama (humming bee breath)**
- **Bhastrika Pranayama (air is forcibly in and out)**
- **Shitali Pranayama (Cooling breath)**
- **Bahya Pranayama (forcibly breath in, breath out and then hold the breath)**
- **Kapalabhati Pranayama (exhales air from lungs is forcibly but inhalate involuntary)**

Benefits of Pranayama

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In order to retain and increase the life force in our body, Pranayama utilizes all five tools:

The tools of Pranayama

1.Rechaka (Exhalation)
2.Antar Kumbhaka (Internal Retention)
3.Bahayia Kumbhaka (External Retention)
4.Bandhas (Locks)
Only when an exercise includes retention with locks, can we speak about Pranayama. Most breathing exercises are actually an easier version of a Pranayama. This is generally accomplished by removing the locks and the external retention (holding the breath after exhaling).

Alternate Nostril Breathing

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Nadi Sodan versus Anulom Vilom

Pranayama is an ancient practice and commonly used breathing technique among yoga practitioners. Nowadays Pranayama as it is often defined as breathing exercise. However that is not fully correct. Not any breathing exercise can automatically be classified as Pranayama.
The most clear way to explain the difference between Pranayama and breathing exercises is by explaining the difference between Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostral Breathing) and Nadi Sodan.
Anulom Vilom is a very popular breathing exercise which is often defined as Pranayama. However Anulom Vilom is not Pranayama, it is a preparation to the Pranayama Nadi Sodan. In the pages we will describe the difference between both of them in more detail with the practice it self.

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When we breathe long and deeply through alternate nostrils, the whole nervous system is soothed, calmed and energized simultaneously. All that takes is from us is to do this alternate nostril breathing for 3–5 minutes and our whole nervous system will be revitalized and calmed.
This particular technique is so simple, yet very effective. It is extremely helpful when we feel off-center and we still must function in the everyday world and in a few minutes we are in a calm state of mind, without drugs or any artificial aid that after a short time would not work or damage other parts of our system and we can do it anywhere no excuses. For instance, we may be scheduled for an important interview, or business endeavor, or even a simple decision making moment and find ourselves extremely nervous or irritable. This technique can help us calm ourselves and be effective in our communication.

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Alternate Nostril Breathing

Nadi Shodhana, or “alternate nostril breathing,” is a simple yet powerful technique that settles the mind, body, and emotions.
You can use it to quiet your mind before beginning a meditation practice; it is particularly helpful to ease racing thoughts if you are experiencing anxiety, stress, or having trouble falling asleep. It is best to balance both sides of the brain and liberate your main life force to flow freely.
There are several different styles of Nadi Shodhana, but they all serve the same purpose of creating balance.The term Nadi Shodhana means “clearing the channels of circulation.”

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An inner energy powers our body and mind, flowing through passageways that branch and intersect like the streets and highways through a city. Among this multitude of Nadis, three govern the body/mind’s overall functioning and determine the general tone of the entire system. These primary channels lie along our spinal column—two twining upward on either side and ending in the nostrils, and the third rising directly through the center of the column to the base of the nose.

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The caduceus is the traditional symbol of Hermes and features two snakes winding around a winged staff, with is the symbol for traditional medicine interestingly enough represents full health.

Yoga texts observed that the flow of energy through Ida and Pingala is rarely equal, and noticed in the nostrils. If you check your breathing right now, you will probably find that one nostril is more open than the other. The nostril with the greater airflow is considered the “active” or dominant nostril, and the other is the “passive” one.

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Ideally, nostril dominance alternates approximately every 90 minutes, although you may find that one nostril remains active much longer, or that regular shifts in nostril dominance rarely occur. While this may seem less than consequential—you’re still breathing, at all times, including through our sleep times—such irregularities can have subtle effects on your mood and activity level.

Texts say that the current of energy ending in the left nostril I is cooling, like the moon; it is associated with the cognitive senses (taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing), with the latent power of consciousness, and with refueling and replenishment. Feminine in character, it denotes inward, nurturing energy. When overly dominant, however, Ida energy may lead to chilliness, passivity, lack of assertiveness, lethargy, and depression, non-decision making.

Conversely, Pingala energy is warming like the sun. Associated with the active senses (locomotion, manipulation, communication, elimination, reproduction activity, assertiveness, and good decision making), with the dynamic aspect of consciousness, and with growth and expansion, this masculine energy denotes outward-moving forces.

When it is overly dominant, right nostril energy may lead to fever, agitation, over assertiveness, and lack of concentration, ungrounded.

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Conversely, Pingala energy is warming like the sun. Associated with the active senses (locomotion, manipulation, communication, elimination, reproduction activity, assertiveness, and good decision making), with the dynamic aspect of consciousness, and with growth and expansion, this masculine energy denotes outward-moving forces.
When it is overly dominant, right nostril energy may lead to fever, agitation, over assertiveness, and lack of concentration, ungrounded.
Sun and moon, male and female, active and receptive, rational and intuitive, contracting and relaxing, hot and cold, unbending and fluid—these and other pairs of opposites comprise the archetypes that best describe the relationship between the two channels of breath.
An inner energy powers our body and mind, flowing through passageways that branch and intersect like the streets and highways through a city. Among this multitude of Nadis, three govern the body/mind’s overall functioning and determine the general tone of the entire system.

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This brief interlude provides a glimpse of equilibrium before the energies tumble back into action. When either Ida or Pingala reigns, we engage with the world, but during the short periods when they flow equally, Sushumna draws awareness inward, creating a quiet inner joy.

Breathing practices have a direct effect on the flow of energy in the Nadis. Using Pranayama, we can arouse or calm energy to produce inner heat or cooling or to direct it for the restoration of health and for longevity. But as in so many other practices of yoga, pranayama first focuses on purification. Your goal is to cleanse the Nadis of impurities that might otherwise disturb concentration and impede the natural movement of Prana.

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Nadi shodhanam—channel purification—is the primary practice used to accomplish this. This cleansing practice, also called “alternate nostril breathing,” involves inhaling and exhaling through one nostril at a time. In addition to opening the flow of energy along the Nadis, this practice calms, purifies, and strengthens the nervous system and deepens self-awareness—excellent preparation for meditation. Finally, Nadi Shodhanam leads to Su-shumna breathing, the experience of the two streams of breath united in a single central flow.

A number of patterns exist for alternating the breath in the nostrils—some simple and some complex. In the following method, which is easy to remember and monitor, you alternate the flow with each full breath.

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Like the spinning center of the earth, Sushumna—the channel of energy flowing along the core of the spine—is said to be unaffected by the powerful energies of ida and Pingala swirling around it. As the mind rests from its outer activity during meditation, it is naturally drawn toward this central channel of energy. With attention anchored in Sushumna, a feeling of deep joy illumines the mind. Following meditation practice, attention turns outward again and resumes an active interest in worldly affairs, often with renewed—and even greater—enthusiasm. The charm of the meditative experience lies in its continual ability to create a subtle mood of happiness and contentment, much like the joy of having witnessed a beautiful sunrise or sunset.

This memory infuses consciousness with reassurance, optimism, and blissful inner feeling.

We can enhance this experience by concentrating on the stream of energy flowing at the nose. Adepts have called this process “establishing Sushumna.” Once accomplished, attention moves inward along the Nadi that courses from the base of the nose to a point centered between the eyebrows and then down through the spinal column.

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These primary channels lie along our spinal column—two twining upward on either side and ending in the nostrils, and the third rising directly through the center of the column to the base of the nose. Ida, as it is known, ends in the left nostril, Pingala terminates in the right, and Sushumna ends at the base of the nose between the two nostrils.

Yogic literature describes the differences in the energy of the two nostrils beautifully. Like a swinging pendulum, the energies associated with the two nostrils alternately dominate, but during moments of transition, the two become equal.

How do these two modes of human energy affect our everyday lives? Activities such as exercising, controlling an automobile, prescribing medicines, stimulating digestion, performing physically demanding tasks, arguing, inspiring others, going to sleep (warmed by an inner fire), and undertaking any difficult or challenging action are more likely to succeed when the right nostril, or Pingala, is active. Digging in the earth, taking medicines, planting gardens, visiting temples, entering one’s house, investing safely, performing artistically, or reciting mantras, on the other hand, will prosper when the left nostril, or Ida, dominates.

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We can enhance this experience by concentrating on the stream of energy flowing at the nose. Experts have called this process “establishing Sushumna.” Once accomplished, attention moves inward along the Nadi that flows from the base of the nose to a point centered between the eyebrows and then down through the spinal column, the central energy canal (Sushumna).
Once we establish Sushumna, the two nostrils will follow the lead of the intention and begin to flow equally, this is best accomplished with practice. One nostril may feel plugged and unwilling to open, while the other may stream open with no restriction.
This does not mean your practice is going to fail. Now, is important to remember that establishing Sushumna has a lot to do with the ability to remain focused on the sensation of breath as it does with actual changes in nostril dominance. When attention rests firmly on the central stream of energy along the bridge of the nose (Their Eye), meditation will naturally deepen. Having the two nostrils flow equally would help, of course, but the act of focusing attention is the primary ingredient of this and all other practice, energy follows thought.

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When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Start with one or more rounds of Nadi Shodhanam. Next, bring your attention to the feeling of breath in the active nostril. For three to five breaths, focus on the breath as if it were flowing only through that side. Maintain your attention until the breath has become steady and you can feel its flow without interruption, no judgment please.

Let your thoughts come and go without giving them energy or attention. Simply maintain your focus on the breath in the active nostril, letting your nervous system relax and unwind.

Next, bring your attention to the breath in the passive nostril. Again feel the flow of the breath on that side until you can maintain your focus without interruption. Remain here longer than on the active side. By keeping the focus, the nostril may open, and if it doesn’t, it’s okay, it will happen at one point.

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Finally, merge these two streams into one single central stream. Inhaling, breathe as if the breath flows from the base of your nostrils inward to the center point between your eyebrows (the Ajna Chakra). Exhaling, let the breath seem to flow from the Ajna chakra, back to the base of your nostrils. Breathe back and forth along this central stream as you gradually relax your mind. This initiates the practice of establishing Sushumna breathing.

Sit as long as you like, resting your attention on the flow of the breath while relaxing your body and mind.

The breath is a vehicle for deepening concentration and revealing quiet sources of joy. Both Nadi Shodhanam and Sushumna breathing can have far-reaching effects, coordinating the two great modes of energy within the body, mind, and focusing the attention on the central stream of the breath.

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When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

- **Preferably practice on a light stomach,**
- **Empty the bladder beforehand,**
- **Stay within your comfort zone.**

This practice is used in yoga practice sessions; and it is done just after asanas and prior to meditation.
You don’t necessarily have to have a Yoga practice or need to, for that matter; this breathing practice can be done by anyone, from children to any age really; if you have physical conditions that come to your attention, please consult your health practitioner.

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When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Is a lot to learn about Prana. The breath is connected to Neuro-physiology. When the left nostril is dominating, the right side of the brain is active. When the right nostril is functioning, the left side of the brain (logic, thinking and understanding) is active. When the breath predominantly goes in and out through the right nostril and very little through the left nostril, is when knowledge permeates. When the breath predominately goes in and out through the left nostril, you listen and enjoy without understanding the knowledge, like it is music. When the breath flows equally through both nostrils, meditation and prayer happen.

The breath is continuously changing with every action, and certain Prana functions at certain times.The Vedas teach us that the metabolism of your body increases two double when you are breathing through the right nostril than it is when breathing through the left. Following this, when the left is used, it is a good time to drink; when the right is functioning, then it is a good time to eat. The Nadis, the breath, changes every hour. Similarly, Prana changes, as the energy in the planet all around us changes, all the time.

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How to practice Anulom Vilom (Left and Right Nostril Breathing)

Anulom Vilom is a breathing exercise which aims to balance the left and right hemisphere by giving equal amount of oxygen to both parts of the brain. This exercise has a calming and suiting effect on the mind, the breath and the heart beat by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system I personally love to use Anulom Vilom first thing in the morning to start my day.

- **Sit in a comfortable position, place your left hand in Chin Mudra (tip of the index finger and the thumb touching) and your right hand in Vishnu Mudra (bending the index finger and the middle finger)**
- **Place your right thumb on your right nostril and breathe in left for 4 counts**
- **Close both nostrils by closing also your left nostril with your little finger and ring finger, and hold comfortably**
- **Remove your thumb from the right nostril and breathe out through your right nostril for 8 counts**
- **Breathe in through your right nostril for 8 counts**
- **Hold your breath for 8**
- **Breathe out through your left nostril for 8 counts**

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This is one round of Anulom Vilom. This breathing exercise should be continued for 5 minutes for beginners. When inhaling for 4 counts, ideally you should hold the breath for 16 counts, but with beginners it is advisable to start with holding the breath for 8 counts and to build up gradually to 16 counts.
Please be your own judge, and don’t force or feel unsafe, the practice is for you to increase your breathing capacity and get healthier not to hurt your self.
Breading PRACTICES are just that practice, practice and that increases the ability to breath correctly.

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When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

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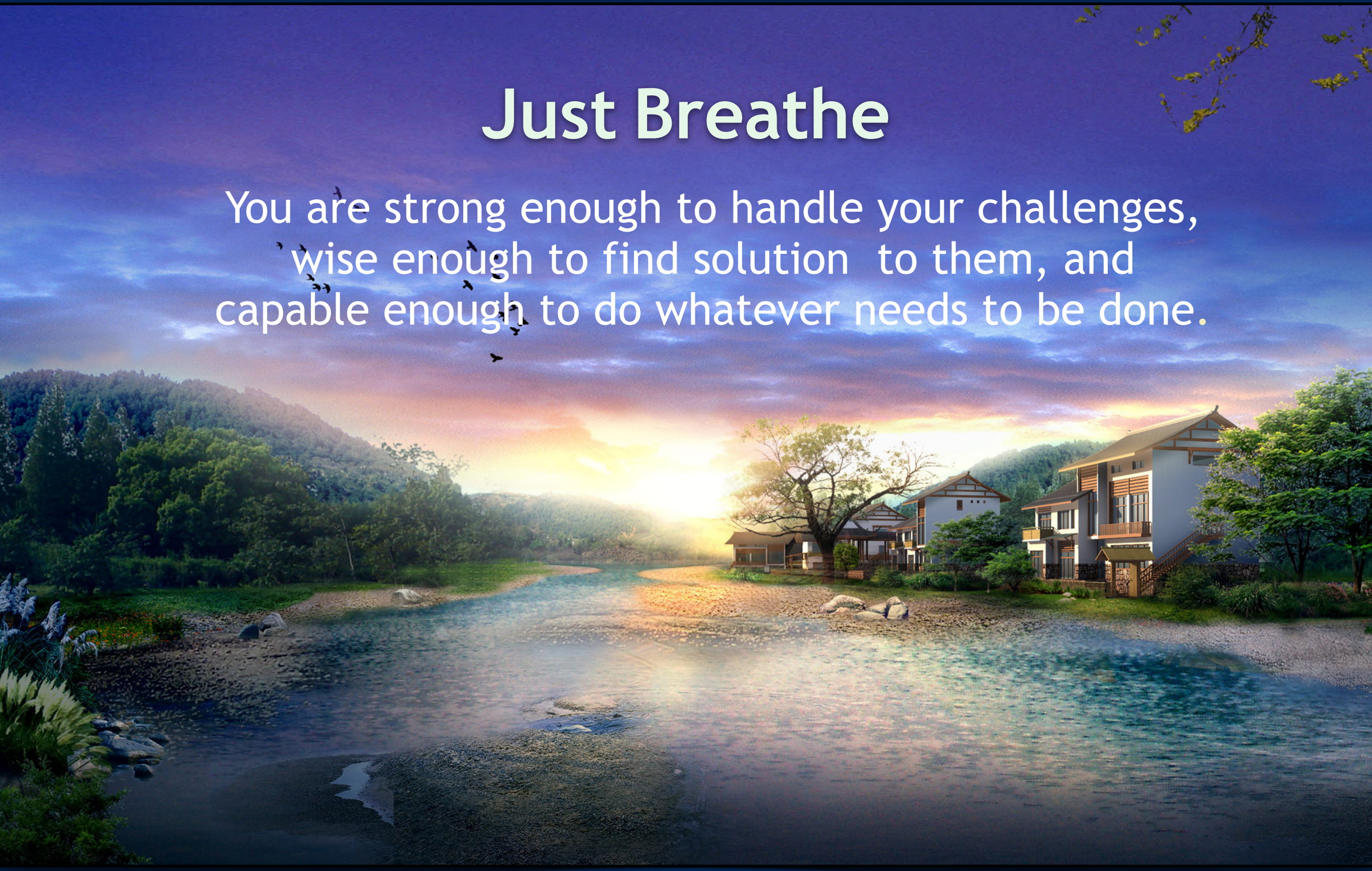
The breath is continuously changing with every action, and certain prana functions at certain times.The Vedas teach us that the metabolism of your body increases two double when you are breathing through the right nostril rather than it is when breathing through the left. Following this, when the left is used, it is a good time to drink fluids; when the right is functioning, then it is a good time to eat. The Nadis, the breath, changes every hour. Similarly, Prana changes, as the energy in the planet all around us changes, all the time.

Just Breathe

You are strong enough to handle your challenges,
wise enough to find solution to them, and
capable enough to do whatever needs to be done.



CHAPTER 6

Complete Belly Breathing

Significant studies over the years have established the fact that by practicing gratitude, we can handle stress better than others. By merely acknowledging and appreciating the little things in life, we can rewire the brain to deal with the present circumstances with more awareness and broader perception.

By reducing the stress hormones and managing the autonomic nervous system functions, gratitude significantly reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety. At the neuron-chemical level, feelings of gratitude are associate with an increase in the neural modulation of the prefrontal cortex, the brain site responsible for managing negative emotions like guilt, shame, and violence.

The Mindfulness Awareness Research Center of UCLA stated that gratitude does change the neural structures in the brain, and make us feel happier and more content. Feeling grateful and appreciating others when they do something good for us triggers the 'good' hormones and regulates the effective functioning of the immune system. Scientists have suggested that by activating the reward center of the brain, gratitude exchange alters the way we see the world and ourselves.

Now we are going to talk about the importance of Breathing. Everyone starts life with a breath, and a breath concludes our life at the end, between our first inhale and our last exhale we are breathing
all the time, even when we sleep
Our Breath sustains our life; what few people don't understand is how vital correct Breathing is in terms of enhancing the quality of one's life. We have trillions of cells in our bodies, and they all need the benefits of proper oxygenation.
The trouble is most of us do not breathe as efficiently as we could; many of us, are breathing with such inefficiency that instead, it contributes to our stress and unnecessary tension.
So today we're going to talk about the importance of correct breathing
and we're going to start with you sitting down whether you're sitting on the ground or a chair; it won't make any difference for the purposes of this demonstration.

It is essential that you are very comfortable. What we want you to know is how to improve the quality of the breath we receive. I am using that word receive because a big part of proper breathing is learning to receive the beginning of the inhale when we do that we have a deep inner exhale and I would say with most people the weakness in their respiratory system is reflective of the weakness in the way they exhale.

So let's just begin by establishing a good foundation. Let's start by feeling the sit bones, which is very important here; you will gently curve the spine back and forth over the sit bones, mentally connect to the earth, some of you will find it much of an advantage to sit with some lift.

It can be a rolled-up blanket that you can put under your sit bones, and it will make it easier to sit up straight the straighter your back is, the easier correct breathing will occur.

On the inhale, they can open and expand and receive better circulation to their particular functions. This assists in digestion as the diaphragm moves up with the exhale. The abdominal muscles come together and help push things through the intestines and colon. This breathing assists in this peristaltic action. In addition to those two actions. it's important to note that as you deepen the breath, you are expelling old air that otherwise would be re-inhaled When we expel out the old, we can receive a new breath. It fills the lower part of the lungs, where the capillary beds are denser, providing a more efficient way to oxygenate the bloodstream. There are many other benefits associated with correct breathing, but to get started, just begin to give a little extra focus to the exhale.

Deepening the exhales, the navel goes in, and the diaphragm comes up, and on the inhale, this softens, remembering to exhale will help your inhale. Like the old saying, we have to give to receive.

To begin with the practice, we want to use the muscles of our lower belly. We need to use these muscles to give direct support to the thoracic diaphragm. What we are going to do is put our fingers approximately an inch and a half below our belly button and now slowly inhale and let the belly soften and fill up and open on the exhale. We're going to use these muscles to help bring the navel in so the diaphragm can come up, that's the basic exhale. At the inhale, the diaphragm opens and softens, air moves to the bottom of the lungs, and then it spreads out through the ribs, then on the exhale with the power of this navel pulling in pressed gently with the fingers you placed bellow the belly button.

You can then support the thoracic diaphragm, and the old air gets pushed out as we begin to breathe more equally and calmly. Here we create the emotion of calmness, and this is when the exhale and the inhale begins to move at approximately the same speed when we inhale, your upper belly stays soft to support the lower belly.

Then, on the exhale, engage these muscles and expel as much of the old air that is actually comfortable that will create more significant space to inhale greater amounts when you inhale again.
The inhale opens the Dome of the diaphragm, maintaining a small amount of tension in the lower belly to give support.
As we learn to breathe deeper and slower, surprisingly, we become calmer.
We may not be aware that the heart itself sits on the thoracic diaphragm, so correct breathing creates a natural massage to the heart. The internal organs are also being massaged as we exhale, the tension that's applied upon them gets the fluids they don't need out of these organs.

As you learn to deepen your capacity to give older air your ability to receive. Fresh air will increase.
As the beginning of the inhale improves, this will go a long way towards improving our posture as well because most people's postural challenges are the result of the week exhale. For example, if your exhale is unsupported, we tend to fall forward, and the sternum tends to fall with the exhale over time, our posture gets compromised, our lung capacity becomes reduced. As we develop, strength in the support of the exhale, it sets the alignment that helps our posture to reduce the amount of tension necessary to sit up straight or to stand straight. So as you see, breathing correctly is crucial for our overall wellbeing.

Let me give you one simple exercise that can help you achieve an essential breath, and it's called a spinal flex (it is demonstrated in one of the videos in the links at the end of the book)
If you are going to use this method correctly, exhale to push the old air out, and roll the sit bones toward the front of your pelvis, next on the inhale, you're going to push the sit bones straight down and allow the dome and the diaphragm to open to come forward, so inhale — exhale, inhale — exhale, — inhale —exhale at your own pace. This can also be done sitting at your desk, and also sitting as a passenger in the car.
Just while waiting, you can take a moment to inhale — exhale — inhale — exhale to feel the breath move the spine.

You can do this in many places when you are sitting, take a moment to sit up straight, inhale — exhale just reminding yourself to breathe deeper and to give more emphasis to the exhale so that the inhale can
adequate inflate the lungs and oxygenate your bloodstream. This is just a beginning for a life of better breathing, it influences overall wellness and vitality.

I encourage you to spend a little time each day concentrating on better breathing. It will serve you well for the rest of your life and the world around you.

I wish you a happy, healthy, conscious breathing.

The importance of understanding from where we get the energy. We get the energy from Pranamaya Kosha and the energy is stored in the Belly, and if we think how many Belly issues are there we realize that perhaps we don't breath corre ctly. This is the energy reservoir. If a child is observed carefully, the child breathes from his belly and that is the right way to breathe. His chest portion is totally unaffected. This type of natural breathing brings more Prana (life force) and overall wellness in.

If we are always breathing from the chest, our state of mind will always be tense and fearful. The chest breathing is only for situations of danger and if it has become a habit then we will always be tense and fearful, either in the flight or fight mode, exhausted and drain.

Scientists in the west who are Working on the bio energy – the Prana. Have come across the observation that people who are fearful have a tense chest and they breathe very shallow. And when they were asked to breathe deeply through their belly – the Hara center, their fear disappeared and they could relax. By changing the way we breathe we can regulate the state of mind and be fully in control.

Deep breathing is also known belly breathing, abdominal breathing and paced respiration. Belly breathing is the most simple and effective breathing technique which improves your overall wellness.

Close your eyes gently and be aware of your breathing through your day.
Lie on your back and relax the body
Begin lying on your back on a flat surface, head supported by a pillow. Bend your knees (you can place another pillow under your knees for support) and place one hand on your belly and another on your chest to feel your diaphragm raise as you breathe.
Relax your hand as much as possible.
Inhale through your nose inhale until your abdomen, if filled with your breath and the hand and stomach moves upward, while the chest remains still as possible. Exhale the breath slowly bringing your Belly in like you want to touch your spine. The air should be pushed out through your stomach with this action. Exhale your breath until you can comfortably exhale your breathe.
Repeat doing this each day, and you soon will experience amazing results.

Scientific evidence on the benefits of breathing correctly

Relaxation techniques: Breath control helps quell errant stress response.
Harvard Medical School

https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/relaxation-techniques-breath-control-helps-quell-errant-stress-response

How Breath-Control Can Change Your Life
US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6137615/

Decrease stress by using your breath
Mayo Clinic

https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/decrease-stress-by-using-your-breath/art-20267197.

Proper Breathing Brings Better Health
Scientific American

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/proper-breathing-brings-better-health/

To improve students' mental health, Yale study finds, teach them to breathe
YaleNews

https://news.yale.edu/2020/07/27/improve-students-mental-health-yale-study-finds-teach-them-breathe

Mindful Breathing
Berkeley University

https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/mindful_breathing

Chapter 7

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace"

Principles to Remember:

- **Your rate of breathing and your state of mind are inseparable.**
- **The slower your rate of breathing, the more control you have over your mind.**
- **The mind follows the breath, and the body follows the mind.**

The average rate of breathing for most people is about sixteen times per minute. When the rate of breathing increases, or if it becomes rapid and irregular, the mind also becomes disturbed and erratic.

Breath and Mind Connection

Why or how does the breath control the mind? When your mind is calm, meditative, and under your control, your rate of breathing will be slow, steady, and calm. By breathing slowly and steadily you will calm your mind. As you change your rate of breathing, you change your state of mind.
Of all the positive changes a person can make, learning to breath deeply and completely is probably the most effective tool for developing higher consciousness and for increasing health, vitality, and connectedness in one's life.

Chapter 7

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

We have to understand from where we get the energy. We get the energy from Pranamaya Kosha and the energy is stored in the Belly. It is the energy reservoir. If a child is observed carefully, the child breaths from his belly and that is the right way to breathe.So the right way to breathe is through the Belly and not through the chest.If you are always breathing from the chest, your state of mind will always be tense and fearful.
Deep breathing is also known belly breathing, abdominal breathing and paced respiration. Belly breathing is the most simple and effective breathing technique which improves your health.
Breath is life when we stop breathing we die, is simple as that.

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Posture and Breathing

Poor posture also contributes to breathing pattern dysfunction. This is commonly seen in people who spend long hours sitting each day. Rounded shoulders and a forward head posture cause the muscles around the chest to tighten. That tightening limits the ability of the rib cage to expand and causes people to take more rapid, shallow breaths.

How posture and breathing affect movement
Breathing from your chest relies on secondary muscles around your neck and collarbone instead of your diaphragm. When this breathing pattern is accompanied by poor posture, many muscles in your upper body aren’t able to function properly.
The longer you sit during the day, the less your body is able to fight the forces of gravity and maintain a strong, stable core.

Chapter 7

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Tight accessory muscles around the chest cause a rounded shoulder and forward head posture. This weakens the back by inhibiting muscles that help maintain an upright posture, including the:
latissimus dorsi
middle trapezius
rhomboids
quadratus lumborum

Tight accessory muscles can also cause shoulder instability and impingement syndromes. The tightness can inhibit muscles and tendons that allow you to move your shoulder blades freely. These muscles and tendons include the:
serratus anterior
biceps tendon
posterior deltoid
supraspinatus
infraspinatus

Chapter 7

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Research has shown that people with ongoing mild-to-moderate neck pain or sore, stiff neck muscles have problems using the lungs and respiratory system to their full capacity.
f you sit down and lean over, stretching your hands toward the floor in front of your feet, your breathing is far more difficult, because the two balloons in your chest—your lungs—cannot be filled as easily with air.
What does this extreme example tell us? Quite simply, the more restrictions you place on your breathing, the harder it becomes. Leaning over squeezes your lungs, making them smaller, and decreasing your breathing volume. Shallow breathing means less oxygen into your system. Less oxygen means less energy.
Slumping in a chair produces bad results, but so can slouching or rounding your shoulders while standing. Sitting or standing straight for a few minutes after slouching most of your life is not good enough. Your muscles, tendons and ligaments become trained by constant slouching.

Chapter 8

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

BREATHE INTO YOUR BACK

The spine is intimately connected with the respiratory diaphragm, and understanding their symbiotic relationship will help steer your posture improvement in the right direction. The diaphragm is a parachute-shaped muscle that lines the lower six ribs and the last six vertebrae of the thoracic spine. (The thoracic spine has 12 vertebrae, all of which attach to ribs.) The diaphragm also hooks into the front side of most of the lumbar (low back) bones.

Organizing these bones and toning the diaphragm helps rearrange the tension patterns of the spine from the inside-out and provides a more efficient lattice for the diaphragm to elongate and contract upon.

Chapter 7

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Good posture cannot happen if the breath is trapped, restricted, or underused.

What’s more, your posture directly impacts the way your body breathes. Excess pressure on the body’s respiratory diaphragm and intercostal muscles alter the ability of those muscles to dynamically contract and lengthen to their fullest.
A chest breather’s posture will alter over time to accommodate the habit of “bad breath.”Bad posture follows you aroundOur physical structure begins to adapt to our inefficient position and over time we can develop chronic aches and pains that are directly related to how we carry ourselves in the world..
On the flip side, simply slouching as a postural habit can give you shortness of breath, as can the habit of popping one hip out to the side all the time. As tension builds up in core and spinal muscles surrounding your breathing muscles, unwelcome spasms can occur that further alter the possibilities of a full breath.

When you own your breath nobody can steal your peace”

Video Links to Practice

Belly Breathing Vide

https://vimeo.com/446922343/86d06f6a15

Alternate nostril breathing video link

https://vimeo.com/whyirama/review/446931066/e1c57ec96b

Breathing is a practice that helps us to develop a calm, clear, and focused mind. With mindfulness breathing we develop concentration and awareness. A concentrated mind, flexible and alert, is poised for insight into the nature of mind and life itself.
For a grounding introduction to the practice of
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