

Breathing Practice – Pranayama

Breathing Practise 2 – Complete Yoga Breath

Importance of Breathing

Research informs us that on average many of us only use about 1/8th of our lung capacity. The complete yoga breath encourages us to use our full lung capacity to benefit our health and well being.

Our breathing habits can be caused by many things including tension, tight muscles, stress, frustration and anxiety. The complete Yoga Breath improves energy levels, concentration and circulation; it feeds the brain and calms the mind whilst allowing us to control our emotions and stress.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing is innate to us, babies do it without training however later in life when stress sneaks in we forget how to do it. In diaphragmatic breathing the diaphragm moves down expanding the abdomen and filling the lower lungs; the intercostal muscles allow the rib cage to expand and fill the middle lungs; the collar bones lift filling the top part of the lungs. This means that the full capacity of the lungs is being used. We then exhale fully from each three parts and the diaphragm raises which along with the intercostal muscles pushes out all the waste products from the breath.

Instructions

- Find a comfortable position either sitting in a chair, crossed legged on the floor or lying on your back
- Inhale and exhale for the count of 4 visualising the air flowing into your abdomen, letting it rise and fall with the breath
- Repeat 3 more times
- Inhale for the count of 4 visualising the air flowing into the ribs as they expand in every direction with the breath
- Repeat 3 more times
- Inhale for the count of 4 visualising the air flowing up to the collar bones as they rise and fall with the breath
- Repeat 3 more times

(Putting it all together for the Full Yogic Breath)

- In one full 4 count inhalation draw the breath first into the abdomen, then the ribs and then up to the collar bones
- In one full 4 count exhalation breathe out from the collar bones, ribs and abdomen.
- Repeat a minimum of 3 more times