

Basic Breathing Techniques

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9. Basic Breathing Techniques

Physical relaxation is not just important from a health point of view, but it is vital for any meditational or spiritual development.

Therefore, as a starting point, breathing exercises should be practiced over a period of time, depending on each individual's capability; this may take from a few days to many months. But certainly, the breathing exercises should precede any meditational and/or any other type of inner (e.g. mental or spiritual) functions, regardless of whether the individual has achieved and mastered the complete range of breathing techniques or whether these have become part of his/her daily life or not.

The breathing exercises should be simple and easy to practice, according to the physical needs of each individual.

Wearing suitable comfortable clothes (no jeans or tight garments) can help in speeding up the relaxation of your body in general and your muscles in particular

Please note that if you suffer from any type of physical illness, then the advice here is that you must consult your doctor first before any exercises are undertaken.

It is advisable to try to relax each muscle in your body, if you wish, before you start your breathing exercise, especially in the early stages. Laying down on your back and starting with your toes, tense your muscles and then relax them. Then move upward to each muscle in the legs, thighs, and so on, until you reach the head, where you can tense the scalp in a similar way and then relax it.

Finally, tense your whole body in one go and then suddenly relax every part at the same time. You can do this several times, until you feel that most of your body, if not all of it, is relaxed or close to being relaxed.

Now, let us assume you are in a good health and ready for the basic exercise offered in this report.

To start the breathing exercise, you should find a quiet place where you can stay alone, without any interruptions, for the period you require for the exercise. Sit on a comfortable mattress, crossed legged, or on a straight-backed, armed, chair. Your spine must be straight during the whole period of the exercise (and later on during the meditation itself).

Breathe in slowly (through your nose), and, as you breathe in, count up to four. Hold your breath and count to four again, then breathe out slowly (through your mouth), counting to four once more.

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Repeat the breathing exercise for few minutes on your first exercise and then increase the period by a minute or two on each following exercise, until you feel that physical relaxation is actually taking place (of course, without falling asleep during the exercise itself!).

The idea here is that, over a period of time, this kind of breathing will be part of your daily life, where oxygen can reach to the farthest parts of your lungs, at the same time cleansing them as you breathe out whatever has accumulated inside the lungs during your past shallow breathing.

You can strengthen the above by visualizing images at the same time i.e. whenever you take a breath in, you visualize and believe that a healthy, pure, brilliant white light is coming in, and, when you breathe out, you can imagine that you are getting rid off all the negative things you may have accumulated recently and/or in the past (both physical and mental), in the form of a grey light.

It is not necessary to do the visualizing part at this stage, if you do not wish to do so, or if you feel that the visualizing process is difficult or is simply distracting you from the main breathing exercise itself.

The best result you can get is by instructing your subconscious mind before you sleep about the importance of breathing correctly and regularly, and that you are determined to make it part of your daily, regular, breathing habit.

Starting the exercise at the same time each day or even twice or three times a day, on a regular basis will help greatly as well. However, if this is not possible, then just carry on doing the exercise as it fits in with your normal working and social life.