



Breath of Life

Simple Breathing Techniques For Abundance of Energy



Main Manual

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W elcome to the Breath of Life e-book!

In this section of the Total Transformation System, we're going to dive deeply into one of the most fundamental aspects of life: the way we breathe.

Now, you may think you don't need any assistance in this area. After all, you've been breathing your entire life and have gotten on perfectly fine without help, right?

Well, the truth is, there's a lot you don't know about proper breathing with regards to your overall health. And most of us do not exercise proper breathing in our daily lives.

Improper Breathing Consequences

Why should improper breathing matter to you?

Well, because the way you're breathing right now could be causing some real damage to your body. For example, your heart rate is directly connected to your breathing rate in a phenomenon called respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA). When you inhale, your heart rate increases and when you exhale, it decreases. Although scientists aren't yet sure why heart rate is linked to breathing, it's been suggested by some studies that this is a way for the human body to save energy. When you increase the efficiency of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the lungs, it allows more energy to be stored for later.¹

What do I mean by "proper breathing"? Let me begin by asking you a question: have you ever noticed how loudly a baby can cry and scream? If you've ever been on a long flight or trying to enjoy a nice dinner out with your family, you certainly know what I'm talking about. Those little bodies can produce such a loud noise! How is that possible?

As it turns out, babies are experts at a technique called *deep breathing*, where a person breaths from their diaphragm. Most of us take shorter breaths from our chest, which results in "shallow breathing" and deprives us of all the benefits of deep breathing.

¹ <http://explorecuriocity.org/Explore/ArticleId/705/why-does-your-heart-rate-decrease-when-you-take-a-deep-breath-705.aspx>

Why Proper Breathing Is So Important

There are a number of benefits to retraining your breathing patterns. If you can get more adept at diaphragmatic breathing, you'll see your health improve a number of ways:

- **Deep breathing calms your anxiety.** 18% of Americans struggle with anxiety.² If you're anxious, that speeds up your breathing, making it more and more shallow (meaning it doesn't come from as deep as it should). This sends a signal to your brain that you're not getting enough air, and you may begin to hyperventilate. Feeling anxious makes your sympathetic nervous system kick in and prepare for potential danger.³ Deep breathing, on the other hand, gives your brain the "all clear" signal and lets your body know it's time to relax. When you're able to do this, the normal symptoms of anxiety like rapid heart rate and shakiness are alleviated! You see, your body has a group of about 3,000 cells whose job it is to connect the type of breathing you're doing to a particular state of being, like anxiety and relaxation. They're responsible for the kind of breaths you take, so what we're going to do in this section of the Total Transformation System is train your body right down to the cellular level so you can assuage your anxiety levels with some specific techniques!
- **Deep breathing is a natural pain reliever.** You may have had someone at some point tell you that "you seem tense" during

² <https://adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics#>

³ <https://blog.spire.io/2017/11/01/benefits-deep-breathing/>

periods of stress or anxiety. Well, that's because we are physically tensing our body up and putting ourselves in pain. Tensing for too long makes our muscles and joints ache, and is in fact one of the leading causes of mild muscle pain.⁴ When you experience deep breathing, your body releases endorphins -- hormones with inflammation-fighting capabilities that can decrease the pain you're feeling throughout your body,⁵ particularly in your back and neck, where we carry most of our stress.

- **Deep breathing reduces stress.** The term “fight or flight” is known as the stress response, referring to the moment the body confronts a potential danger. This can be largely beneficial in certain situations; the problem is, the “fight or flight” response is often triggered by issues like issues involving work, money or family. This can result in higher blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease.⁶ The buildup of stress can also lead to anxiety and depression. In the 1970s, cardiologist Dr. Herbert Benson of Harvard Medical School developed what he called the “relaxation response” -- a state of profound rest that helps the body respond to stressful situations. And a major focal point in his studies included using deep breathing to relieve stress.⁷
- **Deep breathing boosts your energy.** As I mentioned earlier, when we engage in shallow breathing from the chest, we prevent the body from getting enough oxygen, which makes the body tense. Prolonged stress throughout the day can leave us feeling completely drained at the end of the day. If we focus on deep breathing, on the other hand, our bodies will be more relaxed as we move along in our day and won't be completely zapped of energy. In addition, deep breathing reduces blood pressure and increases blood circulation, two factors directly connected with energy levels.

⁴ <https://www.healthline.com/health/muscle-aches#types>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3104618/>

⁶ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/relaxation-techniques-breath-control-helps-quell-errant-stress-response>

⁷ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/six-relaxation-techniques-to-reduce-stress>

How to Use Deep Breathing

I'm going to show you how you can incorporate deep breathing into your daily ritual in simple, effective techniques, so that you can enjoy all of the aforementioned benefits.

Belly Breathing

Here's how simple improving your breathing can be.

First, place your hands over your Tan Tien. *What the heck is your Tan Tien*, you ask? In ancient Chinese medicine, the Tan Tien is the area of the body through which energy can enter.⁸ The Tan Tien is broken into three sections: the upper, middle and lower Tan Tien, and it's the lower one that is most important for breathing. It's three finger-widths below your navel.

So with your hands three finger-widths below your navel, breathe into your hands. Inhale as your arms move inward during the exercise, and exhale as your arms move outward.

You may need to try it a few times to really get the hang of it, but there should be a noticeable difference in your breathing pattern. This is going to increase your oxygen intake, which will stimulate relaxation

⁸ <https://healthyliving.azcentral.com/to-tan-tien-breathing-exercises-4118.html>

throughout the body (remember the connection between breath and relaxation).

Now, you may be wondering how long you're supposed to inhale/exhale. These are known as cycle times, and a lot of people recommend different ratios. Instead, we recommend focusing on the complete relaxation of the belly and letting your body find the natural rhythm for you.

Smile Breathing

Another technique I'd like to show you is Smile Breathing. I learned this technique awhile ago and every time I've used it, it's been integral in helping boost my energy, lift my mood and calm any anxiety I may have been feeling.

Start by simply observing where you feel your breath in your body. Take deep breath by inhaling through the nose. Hold for 1-2 seconds, and exhale through the nostrils. Hold the exhale for another 1-2 seconds. On the second inhale, allow a big smile to enter your mind -- an inner smile (I always like to think of something that brings me immense joy during this part, like my family!), hold for another 1-2 seconds, exhale through the nostrils again. Continue breathing just like this. Keep that happy thought vivid in your mind as your inner smile brightens and spreads throughout your entire body.

Now, allow the inner smile that has penetrated every inch of your body to finally represent itself outwardly. Bring your smile muscles up as you continue to feel and observe your breath. Breathe in calmly, and breathe out a smile.

You'll notice that your entire body starts to relax and feel good. I want you to feel a complete calmness, and the idea that your entire body is smiling.

Even just one minute of smile breathing can be enough to boost your happiness and energy levels for the entire day! Again, it's one of my absolute favorite exercises because it nourishes my body, my mind and my soul.

2-to-1 Breathing

This is a terrific technique to employ at points in the day where you begin to feel particularly stressful: sitting in traffic, trying to finish something at work, or perhaps while undertaking a long, daunting task or chore. If you're able to master this, you'll be able to eliminate your stress and the truncated, shallow breathing that our bodies do when we feel like we're in a "fight-or-flight" situation.

Begin with your eyes open but relaxed. Place your hands on your Tan Tien and take a breath in through your diaphragm. Breathe through your nose. You should feel your stomach expanding as your lungs fill with air. The idea of the 2-to-1 breathing technique is that you should exhale for about twice as long as you inhale. We all have different lung capacities so there's no "set" time for how long your breaths should be. I typically do about 5 seconds inhaling, and 10 seconds exhaling. Again, you want to focus on your breath and where you're feeling it in your body. Don't hold at the top or the bottom of the breath; simply roll smoothly into the next breath.

If you can do this just a few times, you can melt away the energy-draining stress you're experiencing in moments.