

Energetic First Aid: Breath Work

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When you breathe. . . inhale through your nose because the nose is a natural filter. Your sense of smell will warn you if the air you are breathing is clean or polluted, healthy, or toxic. As the air passes through the nasal cavity, it warms the air up before it hits the lungs. Breathe in and out through the nose, unless instructed otherwise. Start slow. Explore different techniques for 3-5 minutes. Take notes and notice results. Then build up to a more robust practice of 5-10 or even 15 minutes of your chosen breath work self-care tools.

Caution: Though your chest lifts as you inhale, do not force your shoulders to lift so you can breathe in more deeply. Lifting the shoulders to increase the amount of air you take in will actually add tension to your shoulders. Just relax your shoulders as you breathe in.

Yoga science explains that when the *prana*, the subtle energy, moves through the body, if the nervous system is weak, the sudden pouring in of prana will sometimes create dizziness. If you do feel dizzy or uncomfortable, take a pause and return to normal breathing until your nervous system strengthens.

Disclaimer: All breathing techniques are not suitable for all students. If you have any health conditions or concerns about your ability to perform a breathing practice, be sure to check with your health care practitioner or a trained yoga instructor before beginning your practice.

Breath Practice	Technique	Benefits
1.0 EARTH BREATH <i>Also known as:</i>	Slow breath from 10 to 12 respirations per minute to 6 breaths per minute ▪ Place one hand over the chest and the other hand on the belly	Earth Breath helps you relax, ground and integrate mind, body and spirit Grounding, integrating.

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<p><i>Yogic Complete Breath</i></p> <p><i>Deep Breathing</i></p> <p><i>Full Yogic Breath</i></p> <p><i>Heartmath-Heart Coherence Breath</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a very slow, deep breath in through the nose. As you breathe in, count to four: 1, 2, 3, 4 (notice how the upper chest expands and lifts) Exhale just as slowly, to the count of four: 1, 2, 3, 4 (notice how the chest lowers, and the belly gets soft) You may notice a natural pause at the end of each inhale and exhale When thoughts or feelings surface, just let them go; and return to the breath. Count 1, 2, 3, 4. This will train your mind to relax. 	<p>Relaxes and soothes the physical body.</p> <p>Decreases blood pressure.</p> <p>Reduces stressful cortisol levels</p> <p>increase the release of soothing oxytocin.</p> <p>Reduces stress.</p> <p>Balances emotions.</p> <p>enhances concentration and mental clarity increases intuitive awareness</p>
<p>1.1</p> <p>Breath + Visualization</p> <p>HEARTMATH</p> <p>HEART COHERENCE</p> <p>BREATH</p> <p><i>Add Positive Visualization</i></p> <p><i>Heart-Math Breath</i></p> <p><i>Slow respirations to between 4 and 6 inhalations and exhalations per minute</i></p>	<p>Similar to the Earth Breath but adding visualization: focus attention directly on heart and add visualization-an image, a memory or experience that evokes a feeling of love, joy and happiness.</p> <p>We can establish heart coherence in as little as 60 to 90 seconds. This changes the physiology and emotional experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breathe in the positive feeling to a count of 4 to 6 ; and exhale to a count of 4 to 6. Heart focus - Focus your attention on your heart center. You can place your hand on the center of your chest to help focus. Heart breathing Imagine that your breath is flowing in and out of your heart or chest area. As you slow your breath; imagine breathing in and out of heart directly. Breathe a little slower and deeper than usual. Find a natural inner rhythm that feels comfortable to you. 	<p>Heart-Coherence Breath (HeartMath Breath) to release stress, improve physical wellbeing, cognition ,and intuition. Connect with your transcendent heart-brain.</p> <p>Builds hearts em field surrounding the heart plexus, which entrains the brainwaves to synchronize with the heart's waves.</p> <p>This field extends between 3-15 feet around the body in a torus shaped ring.</p> <p>Same benefits as the Earth Breath</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heart feeling Activate a positive feeling in your heart (appreciation, love or compassion) You can feel the love you have for a beloved (family, friend, pet ...), or recall an experience of feeling good. 	
<p>2.0 WATER BREATH</p>	<p>Inhale and exhale to a count of six respirations per minute. This breath builds heart coherence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Similar to the earth breath, inhale very slowly and smoothly: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and exhale very slowly and smoothly: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. ▪ As you breathe in, imagine that the air silently, slowly streams in, like water over stones, flowing into and filling every part of the body and mind ▪ Briefly pause at the top of the inhalation ▪ Release the breath slowly and silently in an even, steady stream, out the mouth or out the nose, as it washes away tension ▪ Imagine that all the rough edges of your day are being washed away by this slow, gentle, subtle movement of breath through body 	<p>Soothes emotions and calms nervous system.</p> <p>NOTE: The more silent the breath, the more powerful the stream of prana flows, soothing the soul, calming the nervous system and washing away stress.</p>
<p>3.0 WINDY BREATH</p> <p>Similar to Qi Gong “Pi” method of breathing</p> <p>Note: Swami Vignanananda, who taught this style of breath work, usually combined it with hatha</p>	<p>Long, strong and noisy sniffing breaths in and out of nostrils (Keep Kleenex nearby)</p> <p>It will feel as though you are pumping air are out from the lower belly (2nd Chakra) as you make a strong, noisy exhale through the nose. The Inhalation naturally follows and is also long and strong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Place one hand over the sternum, and one hand on your stomach. 	<p>Relieves mental and physical stress and reduces emotional anxiety.</p> <p>Use to clear the mind and cleanse the body</p> <p>Builds inner strength by strengthening the mind</p> <p>Cleanses and clears mind, nasal passage ways and respiratory system.</p>

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<p>yoga asana practice (though many beginning students may find it too intense for regular asana practice).</p> <p>Swami-ji would always say “deeply, speedily inhale and exhale according to your lungs’ capacity.” With this in mind, it is important that you not force this kind of breathing, as it can cause overstrain or dizziness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inhale through the nose with a very strong, forceful breath in. (Feel the chest and rib cage rise), until you cannot breathe in any more air. ▪ Exhale through the nose with an equally strong, forceful breath out. (Feel your stomach push out against your lower hand). <p>Use your diaphragm to push all the air out of your lungs. The air rushing out of your nose sounds like a strong wind blowing through the trees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice 4 to 6 windy breaths, then follow with a few regular breaths. <p>Dizziness because of the sudden pouring of oxygen and prana through the nervous system fades with practice, as the nervous system and the brain strengthen.</p>	<p>Clears toxins from the blood-circulatory system.</p> <p>Increases the impact of yoga asanas when perfumed with Hatha yoga postures</p> <p>CAUTION: Do not raise your shoulders when you breathe. The motion exercises the diaphragm and internal organs.</p> <p>Do not do this breathing practice if you are pregnant, have vertigo, gastric ulcers.</p> <p>Do not practice this breath on a full stomach.</p>
<p>3.1 <i>Elephant Swing Windy Breath together with Movement</i></p> <p>This variation on the Windy Breath is a wonderful exercise for children (and adults).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position your feet on the ground, distanced slightly wider than your hips. • Your arms are like the trunk of an elephant, swinging from side to side. • Inhale, as you twist and turn to the left, swinging your arms swing like a trunk; the heel of the right foot will come up off the ground slightly as you twist to the left. <p>Exhale twisting to the right, arms swinging to the right; the heel of the left foot will come up of the ground slightly as you twist to the right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each inhale and exhale equals one breath. Breathe in swinging to the left 6-8 times. Then switch breathing in on the right 6-8 times ▪ Return to center and breathe normally for a few breaths. 	<p>Helps you to change your mind, get a new perspective, and shift energy when feeling stuck or frustrated.</p>
<p>4.0 FIRE BREATH <i>Also known as</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do this on an empty stomach. 	<p>For purification - builds spiritual energy, burns through obstructions, overcomes grief, depression, anxiety and</p>

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<i>Bhastrika or "bellows-breath"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exhale is much like a forceful sniff out when you are blowing your nose. The inhale naturally follows. Close mouth and breath in and out through the nose in a rapid series of short, deep sniffing breath. Focus attention on nostrils (not abdomen). 10-50 sniffing breaths is considered 1 round. <p>Practice 1-3 rounds - at end of 1 round, take a deep breath in and hold it for a few seconds (notice the quality of energy you're holding before the next round)</p>	<p>Calms the emotions, purifies the mind and strengthens your spirit.</p> <p>Massages internal organs, improving digestion and respiration.</p> <p>Cleans excess phlegm from respiratory system. Strengthens and tones abdominal organs and muscles.</p>
Variation on Fire Breath 4.1 Sniffing Breath	<p>Here is how:</p> <p>-Exhaling. . Empty lungs using 4 to 7 short, quick sniffing breaths. The sound will be similar to a short sneeze. 7 sniffs out 7-6-5-4-3-2-1 Or if 7 is too much, 4-3-2-1</p> <p>imagine cleansing and clearing each chakra (starting with the crown chakra) with each sniff until you reach the root chakra</p> <p>-Inhaling-Breathe in 4 to 7 short sniffing breaths in the same rapid rate 7 sniffs in 7-6-5-4-3-2-1 Or if 7 is too much, 4-3-2-1</p> <p>4 to 7 sniffs out, and 4 to 7 sniffs in equals one round At the end of a few rounds-Breathe in and out one long slow, silent water breath <u>Resume Normal breathing in and out.</u></p>	<p>Sniffing Breath purify your energy field.</p> <p>cleansing and clearing all residue,</p> <p>fills your energy field with vibrant pranic energy within each chakra.</p> <p>With each sniff, imagine infusing each chakra with its purified chakric energy,</p> <p>Optional: a swash of color associated with each chakra— 1st is Red; 2nd Orange, 3rd is Yellow; 4th is Green; 5th is Blue; 6th is Indigo; 7th is Purple or clear</p>
5.0 ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATH	<p>Use the Earth Breath or Water Breath</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place your index-pointer and middle finger of your right hand on your forehead, over the third eye . 	<p>For inner harmony and psychic balance.</p> <p>Alternate Nostril Breath to reduce mood swings and restore inner harmony and psychic balance</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place the thumb on your right nostril to close off breathing through that nostril. Alternate with placing your and ring finger and little finger of your right hand over the left nostril Hold your right nostril closed with your right thumb, and inhale through the left nostril to a count of 4 or 6 Close the left nostril with your ring finger while releasing your right nostril, and exhale out the right nostril to a count of 4-6 Inhale through the right nostril, close the nostril with your thumb while releasing the left nostril, and exhale out the left nostril <p>Recommended to perform this breathing practice to prepare for meditation</p>	<p>Balances enhances the flow of spiritual energies through the Ida-Pingala and chakra nadis.</p> <p>Balances right and left hemispheres of the brain.</p>
<p>6.0 RETAINING BREATH <i>Kumbhaka</i></p> <p>Puraka Hold your breath after you inhale</p> <p>Rechaka Hold your breath after you exhale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breathe in and hold your breath. The epiglottis will lock to keep the air from escaping out your windpipe. To intensify and circulate internal energies, you may also hold your breath after you have exhaled all the air from the lungs. <p>Advanced practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhale to a count of 4, then briefly hold your breath to a count of 2. Exhale to a count of 4, then pause for a count of 2 before the next inhalation. During the pause, feel the prana circulate through the core of your body, building in strength as it moves through and stimulates your belly chakra. <p>As your system strengthens, increase breathing in to a 6-3-6-3 pattern.</p>	<p>Builds internal reservoirs of energy</p>

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<p>7.0 RHYTHMIC BREATH</p> <p><i>Similar to Holotropic breathwork</i></p> <p><i>Shamanic breath</i></p> <p><i>Rebirthing Breath</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathe in and out without pausing between breaths. • Holotropic breathwork is performed breathing in and out through the mouth. • You may feel yourself move into an altered state of consciousness. • You may alter the intensity by slowing down or quickening breath, or breathing in through nose and out through the mouth. 	<p>Builds, intensifies, and circulates pranic energy in the body, heart and mind</p>
<p>8.0 BLENDING BREATH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice this breathing technique with a partner. • When you are sitting with a client, match your breathing pattern to theirs to enhance empathic, telepathic awareness of your client's emotional and physical state - feelings. • Breathe in rhythm with partner to enhance sending and receiving healing energy. 	<p>Opens intuition.</p>
<p>9.0 UJJAYI BREATH</p> <p><i>Ujjayi means 'to lift up'.</i></p> <p><i>Similar to Tu-Na breathing in Qi Gong</i></p> <p>Sometimes called 'the ocean breath' because it sounds like the ocean in your ears as you practice this breath.</p>	<p>Sit tall with your spine erect (or standing tall).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breathe in through the nose ▪ Exhale from the back of the throat, and you will feel air making a hissing sound, or the sound of a slight 'snore' that sounds like the sound of the ocean. You may have the sensation of the prana moving down the back of your throat through the core of your body as you exhale. ▪ Inhale, feeling the air entering through the back of the throat, over the half-closed, partially constricted epiglottis. You will hear the sound of the ocean on the inhalation. ▪ Keep your mouth closed as you breathe in and out. ▪ On the inhale, visualize subtle spiritual energies entering the body. ▪ On the exhale, circulate subtle spiritual energies throughout the body. 	<p>For overcoming obstacles, overcome anxiety, worry, feeling overwhelmed, uncertain, or insecure</p> <p>Increased clarity of mind.</p> <p>energized and relaxaed.</p> <p>. Increase in faith.</p> <p>Builds spiritual healing energy.</p> <p>Contact and direct vital life energy for healing yourself and helping others. This breath triggers a very calming effect on the nervous system.</p> <p>extra energy, extra relaxation and extra concentration or focus.</p>

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<p>Variation: 9.1 Tree Breath</p> <p>Ujjayi Breath + Movement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As you feel the breath moving down imagine that you move and circulate the air and subtle spiritual energies throughout your body, through the central core of the body--through the torso out your arms and hands, and also through the lower belly, down through the pelvic region and hips, into the legs and out the feet. • On inhale, and exhale (through the nose) move air intentionally across the epiglottis (back of throat) on way down the windpipe, through the core of the body filling the lower belly and pelvic region with prana and oxygen • 	<p>This is can be practiced together with hatha yoga (while doing yoga asana postures) or separately as a breathing practice.</p>
<p>10.0 Column of Light Basque Spiritual Practice Angeles Arrien</p>	<p>Active Meditation plus Breathwork to build your Auric Field</p> <p>Visualize Light from a distant star sending a beam of light through the heavens and penetrating the crown of our head.</p> <p>Spiral this light through your body, out your feet and into the earth.</p> <p>Expand the energy field to fill your body, aura and eventually your entire environment</p>	<p>Reconnects you with spiritual energies and grounds them into your body and the earth</p> <p>Cleanses and clears energy blocks within your body's energy field and builds inner harmony</p> <p>Cleanses and clears your auric field</p> <p>Cleanses and clears energy blocks within your environment and builds harmony.</p> <p>Creates a healing atmosphere for yourself and others</p>
<p>11.0 TONGLIN BREATH</p> <p>Tibetan Buddhist Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consciously allow breath to move in and out of your center (center of being, body, chest, then heart • Notice any painful or difficult feelings...breathe into the pain • Breath in acknowledgement of your feelings; connecting with an inner 	<p>Heal feelings of pain and suffering and develop more self -compassion</p>

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	<p>source that can heal the pain (love, healing, compassion peace etc); breath out extending the energy of love and compassion (**and - or healing for yourself an all others who may be suffering**)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue breathing awareness into your heart and breathing out healing <p>***You can also perform this practice for another person whom you know if suffering</p>	
<p>12.0 HANDS-ON-HEALING Pranic Healing As taught by Dr Beth Hedva</p> <p>12.1 variation With Mindfulness Meditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place your hand on the chakra that is calling to you. Add Mindfulness Meditation: As you breathe in, connect to what is needing healing; and energetically touch the Source of Healing within in you. As you exhale extend healing energies to yourself and beyond yourself to all who may need healing. 	<p>Use Water Breath to soothe and calm the chakra</p> <p>Use Earth Breath to ground energies OR</p> <p>Ujjayi Breath to send yourself healing energy to overcome inner disruptions</p>

Experience your tools

Practice one breathing technique at a time, then reflect on your experience :

1. What shifts do you notice in your body and energy?
2. What shifts do you notice in your thoughts and emotions?
3. Any other reflection?
4. When might you want to use and recommend this breath for self-care?
5. Who would you teach this practice?
6. Share your experiences, are they similar or different?

7. Continue to explore the techniques one at a time and reflect on each associated experience
 - a. As you practice...track your experience.
 - b. Notice shifts in your body's energy
 - c. Notice shifts in your emotions, thoughts and other reflections:
 - d. Share your experiences with a friend or colleague. Are your experiences similar or different?
 - e. Discuss when might you use this breath for self-care?
 - f. When would you teach someone this breath?
 - g. When would you recommend this as a meditation practice?
 - h. Track of your progress

Print and record a summary of your results in the Embodied Awareness Self-Care Daily Log Practice included after the instructions. Notice the quality of energy in your thoughts, emotions and body sensations before and after practice. Note external events that may be contributing to how you feel. After you practice your chose breathwork practice, observe the results.

Embodied Awareness Self-Care Daily Practice Log

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