

Living in the Breath

Breath is literally life. We need oxygen intake for every physiological function. Breath creates energy, it keeps every single cell of our bodies alive. The better we breathe, the healthier we are because the health of our cells impacts all of our autonomy: brain, gut, muscles, blood, bones, skin.

What has to be taught first, is the breath

Confucius

Breathing occurs subconsciously and consciously, as a function of both autonomic and somatic nervous systems. The breath responds according to our emotional and physical state. When we are stressed, it becomes forceful and erratic. When we are calm, it slows down and lengthens, sending a message through the Vagus nerve that we are safe and at peace.

The good news is that we can learn to control our breathing by practicing simple techniques. Engaging regularly in breathing practices will greatly impact your overall wellbeing.

Focus

Find a comfortable position, close your eyes if it feels natural and focus on your breathing. If you keep your eyes open, fix your eyes on a spot in front of you and focus on your breathing.

Notice

Notice your breathing. Don't change it. Just notice each breath in and each breath out. Notice which parts of your body move as you breathe.

Practice

Practice a breathing technique that feels natural and comfortable to you. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, for example. Continue to notice your breathing.

Relax

Feel the relaxation that your rhythmic breathing provides. When you are ready, open your eyes, or get back to your routine slowly and calmly.



Living in the Breath - Practice

1:2 Breathing Technique

- Inhale to a count of 3
- Exhale to a count of 6
- Repeat for at least 7-10 cycles
- Work on increasing the length of the exhale to a 4-8 cycle, for example
- Allow an audible exhale, this help to signal to the nervous system to relax

1. What did you notice most about how you felt before the deep breathing and after the deep breathing?

2. Did you find it difficult to focus on your breathing ?

3. What was the biggest obstacle to letting go of other thoughts and concentrate on your breathing ?

4. How did you get over this obstacle?.

5. Describe your sensations and feeling during and after the exercise. Were they positive, negative or neutral?

6. What can you do to improve this breathing exercise and maximize your enjoyment and beneficial effects?
