

Magic Breath Tool Kit

The following breathing exercises are your magic tools to help you relax and reduce stress, diminish anxiety, and stay grounded and connected.

These exercises can be used before taking tests or engaging in social situations, when dealing with parents and loved ones, and to help you stay calm and composed within. These will also help you stay focused and less likely to be pulled toward actions that might not be healthy for you or in which you do not want to be involved.

If you choose to put your hand over your heart during any of the exercises, this action can help bring you into rest and relaxation by engaging the parasympathetic nervous system. The gesture of hand to heart is a sincere nourishing and healing action for one's mind.

Letting Go Breath (Instant Tranquilizer Technique)

This tool is surprisingly effective and will help you remain steady and comfortable in many situations. The “Letting Go Breath” is experienced by sitting tall and taking a deep breath in through the nostrils then opening the mouth and letting all the air out with a sigh. The sigh can be silent or audible depending upon the situation. For instance, a silent sigh can be used during a test or when speaking with someone in a challenging situation. The audible sigh (“haaaaa”) would be appropriate while driving in heavy traffic, when you're alone, or during group yoga classes.

Three Part Breath (Complete Yogic Breathing)

The “Three Part Breath” utilizes the full capacity of the lungs. By consciously breathing into each of the separate areas of the body, we take in more air than we normally do, and benefit the body in the following ways:

- Calms and relaxes the mind
- Offers a full exchange of air in the lungs
- Increases oxygen delivery to the brain
- Releases tension in the chest and abdomen
- Provides a gentle massage to abdominal organs, improving digestion

Instructions:

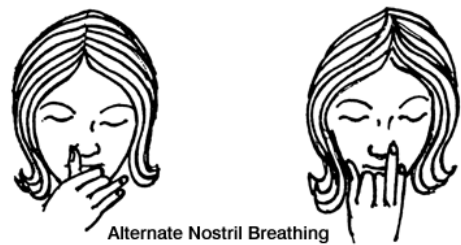
1. Sit comfortably and feel the crown of your head rise to set your posture.
2. Place your palms on your belly, breathe through the nostrils, and allow the belly to expand like a basketball, filling the lungs full of oxygen. Exhale, bringing the navel and spine close together again. Repeat several times.
3. Place your palms to the sides of your rib cage. Began breathing into the belly then into the ribs, allowing the ribs to flair like the gills of a fish. Exhale from the ribs first, then from the belly. Repeat several times.
4. Place the finger tips on the front of your chest just below your collar bones. Began breathing into the belly, then into the ribs, and lastly into the chest, feeling your fingers rise with the breath. Fill the lungs fully, hesitate for a brief moment, and then exhale from the chest, then the ribs, and finally the belly.
5. Rest your hands on your lap and continue this 3 part breathing pattern, at your own rate, for several rounds.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

This technique helps settle and balance the two hemispheres of the brain as well as integrating the whole body. It allows the entire body to function as a whole unit and is extremely helpful before tests or in stressful situations. Alternate nostril breathing can seem strange to students who have never experienced it before but the benefits can be felt.

Instructions:

1. Sit with a tall posture.
2. Place your thumb to the outside of the right nostril and your ring finger to the outside of the left nostril.
3. Seal the right nostril and inhale deeply through the left nostril.
4. Seal the left nostril and exhale completely through the right nostril.
5. Continue to seal the left nostril and inhale through the right nostril.
6. Seal right nostril and exhale through left nostril.



The pattern is inhale left, exhale right, inhale right, exhale left. Once you have the pattern, close your eyes and repeat this sequence several times. Finish with the exhale through the left nostril.

Ocean Sounding Breath

Ocean Sounding Breath” (OSB) helps relax the mind and draws our attention to the self. This movement of breath helps us stay focused in the moment and keeps our attention from wandering.

Instructions:

1. Sitting tall, establish a steady and even Three Part Breath.
2. Open the mouth, constrict the back of the throat, and whisper the sound "e" on the inhalation and “h” on the exhalation, cultivating a steady, smooth sound.
3. Close the mouth and continue through the nose, whispering "e" and "h" to create a soft, smooth sound (like an ocean) from the back of your throat. If the transition to a closed mouth seems awkward, begin by placing a hand in front of your open mouth and on the exhale, pretend you are fogging up a mirror (your hand) while making the “h” sound. Then close the mouth and continue with the ocean sound (also known as the Darth Vader sound).
4. Close the eyes and anchor yourself in this calming sound.

BRFWA (Breathe, Relax, Feel, Watch, Allow)

BRFWA helps you remain within the self and not be pulled out into other energy that may be flowing around you, such as from another person who is upset or agitated.

Instructions:

1. At the first sign of disturbance, take a deep breath. Breathe in deeply, feeling within the body that you are pulling back into yourself.
2. With the next inhalation, relax the body and feel the muscles and tensions letting go.
3. With the next inhalation, feel all you can feel within your body, physically, emotionally, and mentally. You might find concern, happiness, joy, sadness. Feel whatever there is to feel.

4. With the next inhalation, watch the unfolding experience using your witness consciousness (your capacity to observe without judgement). Sense who you are as the witness. No action is needed.
5. With the next inhalation, allow the other person to engage you in whatever manner they choose but allow yourself to stay within yourself, hopefully calm and relaxed.

Setting Your Posture (to open the lungs and allow more air and life sustaining oxygen to enter the body)

As you sit on the floor or in a chair (sitting well back), find your balance, allowing you to be comfortable and steady in your sit. As you do this exercise, each item is added to the one before it.

Instructions:

1. With inhale, pull up the pelvic floor (as if you are shutting off the flow of urine). Then exhale with engaged pelvic floor.
2. With inhale, engage abdominals by pulling the navel to the spine. Then exhale with engaged abdominals.
3. With inhale, roll your shoulder blades back and open your chest forward. Then exhale with engaged open chest.
4. With inhale, reach up through the crown of the head to elongate the spine. Then exhale with engaged spine.
5. With inhale, relax into the feminine strength to sustain the posture and let go of the masculine strength. Then exhale with engaged feminine strength.
6. Maintain this posture during breath work.