



STRESS REDUCTION AND THE SCIENCE OF BREATH

It's time to rethink everything you know about breathing—it just might be the key ingredient in conquering stress and fighting off disease. It might not seem like much, but breathing is the simplest and most effective way to improve your life, your health, and your mind.

Let's start this thing off with a little exercise. Inhale for a ten second count, concentrate on breathing into your diaphragm, and expanding your ribs—hold your breath for four counts—now exhale for two counts, concentrate on pulling your belly-button to your spine. Repeat this breathing pattern nine times.....

By now a couple of things have happened physiologically.

First off, you should feel pretty relaxed from the deep breathing, second your body was quite literally doing some house-cleaning: detoxing your body of the types of toxins that cause cancer, arthritis, and heart disease, just to name some of the big ones. So now that you're feeling relaxed and focused let's break down a little of the science behind breathing.

Your lymph system is twice the size of the "other" circulatory system. That means there's twice as many lymph vessels as there are blood vessels. The function of the lymph system is key to your health. The lymphatic system is responsible for the absorption of excess fluid and its return to the blood stream, the absorption of fat, and immune system function. So to put it real simple: a health lymph system should be high on everybody's priority list. Which only leaves one question: how do you stimulate lymph system functions?

When it comes to blood flow, circulation is improved by increasing the heart rate. When it comes to the lymphatic system: movement, gravity, and breathing are the only ways to get the right fluids flowing. So let's look at a couple exercises designed to give a serious boost to your lymphatic system. [Follow along using the exercises in the sidebar]

LET'S GO STEP BY STEP.

Go back to our first breathing exercise: Inhale for a ten second count, concentrate on breathing into your diaphragm, and expanding your ribs—hold your breath for four counts—now exhale for two counts, concentrate on pulling your belly-button to your spine. Repeat ten times.

This deep breathing will relax your muscles and start an uninhibited flow of detoxifying fluids. Next try adding some movement and gravity. Two of the best classic standby exercises: jump rope and the mini-trampoline offer some of the best

BREATHING EXERCISES



Breathing: Inhale for ten seconds, hold for four seconds and then exhale for 2 seconds.



Rebounder: Jump up and down. Start without leaving the Rebounder then work up to jumping entirely off the springy surface.



Yoga: The three warrior poses offer a rewarding challenge. Notice the front foot is pointing forward and the back foot is to the side.



Upper body rotation: Hold a light medicine ball above your head and rotate from the hips up in slow clockwise and counter clockwise motions.



lymph stimulation possible owing to the vertical motion of each exercise. If you can fit in at the least five minutes a day on the rope or the trampoline, you'll notice the results.

For a more advanced practice the "warrior" pose from Yoga will also be particularly helpful in giving a boost to your lymph system while opening up the leg and the hip muscles.

Or for another standby, try rotating your upper body in slow motion circles, while holding a medicine ball.