Deep
Sym

5 Breathing Practices

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Introduction

This guide has 5 introductory breathwork practices to ground you in mindful intention, and promote calm and clarity. The practices are some of the fundamentals of breathwork, or pranayama, and can be easily integrated into your daily life. Each practice comes with an intention setting to deepen your experience and connection through your breath.

General guidance: Breathe in through your nose and into your belly. Exhales can be through the mouth, and necessary for some practices (lion's breath). You can vary the time of the practice or the rhythm of the breath in some practices, to what suits you.

If you feel any discomfort, dizziness or unpleasant lightheadedness, slow down and gently let your breath come back to it's natural rhythm and sit with it mindfully for a few minutes. Let your breath be your anchor. Practice consciously.

Precautions:

Not for those, or only do it gently, when suffering from:

- Serious heart problems
- Epileptic attacks
- Serious HBP
- Recent brain surgery
- A recent operation in the torso
- Suffering from psychosis or recent trauma
- When pregnant for longer than 4 months

~ Deep Breathing ~

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Intention: May you breathe deeply, opening up the space for trusting yourself and your breath.

Practice: Diaphragmatic breathing, or "belly breathing" involves deeply engaging the diaphragm for full, nourishing breaths. It is a fundamental practice for achieving the best outcomes from breathwork.

Benefits:

- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Lowers heart rate
- Improves lung efficiency

Instructions:

- Sit or lie down comfortably.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Inhale deeply, feeling your stomach rise while keeping your chest still.
- Exhale slowly, feeling your stomach fall.
- Repeat for 2–5 minutes.

Tips: If you really struggle to connect to belly breathing, a fun little trick to engage your diaphragm is to press the tip of your tongue against the roof of your mouth.

~ Deep Experience ~

Ujjayi Breath

Intention: May you experience each moment deeply in it's fullest and be present in each breath.

Practice:
Ujjayi breath, also known as "Victorious Breath," is a yoga breathing technique that involves constricting the throat slightly to create an audible, ocean-like sound as you breathe.

Benefits:

- Calms the nervous system
- Boosts oxygen flow
- Clears and centers the mind

Instructions:

- Inhale through your nose while slightly constricting your throat to create a whispering sound.
- Exhale through your nose with the same throat constriction.
- Continue for 5–10 breaths, focusing on the sound.

Tips: The constriction in the throat should be gentle and natural, not tense. While Ujjayi breath can be soothing, it can also be energising if you increase the speed or intensity slightly.

~ Deep Connection ~

Connected Breathwork

Intention: May you find deeper connection with yourself and with your loved ones.

Practice: Connected breathwork is a rhythmic breathing technique where each breath flows into the next without a pause. It helps to create a sense of flow and connection within the body and mind.

Benefits:

- Enhances focus
- Reduces stress
- Promotes emotional release

Instruction:

- Inhale deeply through the nose for 4.
- Exhale fully through the mouth for 4.
- Don't pause and continue into the next inhale.
- Repeat the cycle in a fluid, connected rhythm for 3–5 minutes.

Tips: Try this with your loved one lying side by side, holding hands or sitting back to back for a deeper connecting experience. Be gentle in this practice. You can change the timing of the rhythm, but faster rhythm will lead to a deeper emotional states which are best accessed with a facilitator.

~ Deep Relaxation ~

4-7-8 Breathing

Intention: May you feel safe to deeply relax the tensions from body and mind.

Practice:

The 4-7-8 breathing technique is a structured pattern designed to calm the mind and body. The longer exhale stimulates the vagus nerve and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, aiding relaxation.

Benefits:

- Promote relaxation
- Aids sleep
- Balances the nervous system.

Instructions:

- Inhale through your nose for 4 counts.
- Hold your breath for 7 counts.
- Exhale through your mouth for 8 counts.
- Repeat for 4 cycles.

Tips: You might find the ratio or the breath hold challenging. You can start with 2-1-4 and increase gradually as your body gets used to it. If you are pregnant, have high blood pressure, or experience anxiety or panic attacks, skip the hold.

~ Deep Release ~

Lion's Breath

Intention: May you release all that no longer serves you and prevents you from growth.

Practice:

Lion's breath is a dynamic breathing exercise that releases tension through a powerful exhalation, often paired with a facial expression.

Benefits:

- Relieves stress and anxiety
- Energy boosting
- Improves circulation

Instructions:

- Inhale deeply through your nose.
- Open your mouth wide, stick out your tongue, and exhale forcefully while making a "ha" sound.
- Repeat 3–5 times.

Tips: As you exhale with the roaring sound, open your eyes wide and make an exaggerated facial expression, as if you were a lion. With this practice you release any tension stored in the jaw, cheeks, and forehead.

Integration

To get the most benefit, practice these techniques regularly, ideally twice a day or whenever you need to relax or de-stress. The more consistent you are, the more effective the technique will be at calming your nervous system.

- Begin with 5–10 minutes of focused breathing daily, increasing over time.
- Anchor to routine: pair breathing with daily activities like brushing your teeth or walking.
- Schedule practice for specific times (e.g., morning, lunch, bedtime).
- Integrate breathing with movement practices like yoga, (particularly ujayi and lion's breath)
- Use during moments of stress and overwhelm.
- Track progress by keeping a journal of your practices and how you feel.
- Practice deep breathing during the day when waiting in line, sitting in traffic, on the tube.

I hope you find benefit in this guide. All the mentioned practices can be used with Sym to deepen your experience and breath awareness through real-time visual feedback. Available for pre-order!

Kira from Deep Sym x