Breathe Well -- Feel Better!

How Simple Relaxation and Breathing Techniques Can Change Your Life

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Educational Series
Disclosure

All Faculty, CME Planning Committee Members, and the CME Office Reviewer have disclosed that they have no financial relationships with commercial interests that would constitute a conflict of interest concerning this CME activity.
Educational Objectives

1. Describe the physiological effects of stress on the body

2. Explain the importance of managing stress

3. Describe the impact of diaphragmatic breathing and stress reduction

4. Identify how to practice belly breathing for stress management and improved oxygenation
Take 60 Seconds to count the number of breaths you take...

Inhale and exhale = 1
Inhale and exhale = 2

4-12

12-15

Over 16
The Psychobiology of Stress

The sympathetic branch of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) kicks in:

• adrenaline, cortisol, and other stress hormones dumped into the blood stream
• soaring heart rate and blood pressure
• increased blood flow to the brain and the large muscles for vigilance and fight or flight
• blood sugar rises for extra energy
• clotting occurs more quickly to prevent blood loss
• metabolism and non-essential functions put on hold
### The Long-Term Impact of Stress ~ 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On The Brain</th>
<th>On the Gastro-Intestinal Tract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• fatigue</td>
<td>• ulcer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• aches and pains</td>
<td>• cramps and diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• crying spells</td>
<td>• colitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• depression</td>
<td>• irritable bowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• anxiety attacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sleep disturbance</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## The Long-Term Impact of Stress ~ 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On The Glandular System</th>
<th>On The Skin</th>
<th>On The Immune System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• thyroid gland malfunction</td>
<td>• itchy skin</td>
<td>decreased resistance to viral-linked disorders ranging from the common cold and herpes to AIDS and cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diabetes</td>
<td>• Rashes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adrenal burn-out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*: people suffering from depression, alcoholism, malnutrition, obesity, and panic disorders have increased cortisol levels.
Stress is relative...

“People are disturbed not by things, but by their perception of things”

Epictetus, 55-135 CE

Greek sage and Stoic philosopher
According to Dr. Andrew Weil, breathing is the ‘Master Key to Self-Healing’

“I feel very strongly that proper breathing is a master key to good health. Over and over again, I’m impressed by the power of breath and its ability to correct specific health problems and promote our general wellness.”
Why & How
Diaphragmatic Breathing Works
# The Effects of Diaphragmatic Breathing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quickly reduces Stress</td>
<td>Activates the Para-Sympathetic branch of the ANS and calms us down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Releases endorphins to ease pain</td>
<td>Removes toxins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxes body and mind</td>
<td>Increases mindfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energizes</td>
<td>Activates the body’s powerful natural healing processes (immune response)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Specific Conditions Benefited by Abdominal Breathing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress, Anxiety States and Sleep Disturbances</th>
<th>Thyroid Irregularities</th>
<th>Breathing Irregularities</th>
<th>Migraine and Chronic Pain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immune System Suppression</td>
<td>Poor Circulation</td>
<td>Cognitive Impairment</td>
<td>Nicotine, Alcohol &amp; Drug Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>Cardio-Vascular Problems like Arteriosclerosis and Hypertension</td>
<td>Hyperglycemia (elevated blood sugar) leading to Type 2 Diabetes</td>
<td>Sexual Dysfunction / Loss of Libido</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let’s Learn How…

• Know your breathing rate
• Assess your breathing pattern
• Take a deep breath…
• Loosen up down there!
• Re-assessments
• Practice it sitting, standing, & moving around
• Practice with patience & self-compassion
Take 60 Seconds again to count the number of breaths you take after the training...

Inhale and exhale = 1
Inhale and exhale = 2

4-12

12-15

Over 16
Summary

• The effect of stress in the body
• The beneficial effects of diaphragmatic breathing for reducing stress, anxiety and improving many health conditions
• How to breathe diaphragmatically and how to practice it at home.
References

- www.relaxandbreathe.net
- *Breathe Well, Be Well*, by Robert Fried, PhD.
- *Science of Breath, A Practical Guide*, by Swami Rama, Rudolph Ballentine, MD, and Alan Hmes, MD
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