

The Art of Breathing
by Riley Lee

Exercises

Deep Panting Breath

Take a full breath through your mouth. Blow out immediately and quickly take another deep breath. Breath deeply in-out in-out etc. as vigorously as possible as if panting for breath after having run a fast kilometre. If there is any tightness, breathe more gently. Only ten inhales and ten exhales at a time.

Shallow Panting Breath

Think of panting shallowly, just like a dog! Take an average breath through the nose. Sticking out your tongue, breathe in and out through your mouth as fast as possible. Concentrate on the air flowing rapidly and evenly over the tongue. Continue for at least ten seconds. Resume normal breathing. Repeat at least three times.

Gentle Breath

Take a full breath through your nose. Immediately blow out through your mouth as gently and smoothly as possible. Exhale for at least 30 seconds. Resume normal breathing. Repeat process at least three times.

Held Breath

Take a full breath through your nose. Do not release, but hold. While holding breath, *relax*, especially diaphragm and shoulders. Hold for at least 30 seconds. Blow out air forcefully, emptying lungs. Resume normal breathing. Repeat process at least three times.

Vigorous Breath

Take a full breath through your nose. Immediately blow out air through your mouth as forcefully as possible, like blowing out birthday candles. Empty lungs completely. Repeat process at least three times.

Sizzle Breath

Take a full breath through your nose. Gently release air through teeth, making a “sizzling” or whistling sound. Make entire exhalation smooth, paying attention to rough places in the sound. Exhale for at least 30 seconds. Resume normal breathing. Repeat process at least three times.

Candle Blowing

(It's best to use two candles, one to light the other when you blow it out.)
Take a full breath through your nose. Blow gently into a lighted candle flame.

Blow until only the blue of the flame remains, *without* blowing it out. *Do not be afraid to blow the candle out.* Empty lungs completely. Resume normal breathing. Repeat process many times.

Silk Thread

Gently inhale through your nose. While inhaling, imagine the air travelling vertically downward to your feet. Pause after a full inhalation. Imagine a sunrise. *Relax muscles!* Gently blow out air, imagining that the air is a fine silk thread travelling *so* smoothly through empty space. As you blow out, gradually, but imperceptibly, lean forward. Empty the lungs completely. Pause after full exhalation. Imagine a sunset. *Relax muscles!* Repeat process immediately. Continue for 5 to 30 seconds. Inhalation is much shorter than exhalation.

Complete Breath

Gently inhale through your nose while counting four “beats” (or about 4 seconds). Hold breath. *Relax the entire body—particularly the shoulders!* Count eight beats.

Gently exhale through your nose while counting sixteen beats. Control exhalation so that lungs are empty (but not forced) on the sixteenth beat.

Hold on empty. *Relax the body!*

Count four beats.

Immediately repeat the process without resuming normal breathing.

When breathing in, imagine inhaling goodness, light and energy.

When breathing out, imagine exhaling tensions, illness, anger and fear.

Continue for 5 to 30 minutes.

Silent Breath

Gently exhale through your mouth. Pause, Inhale through your mouth as quickly and fully as possible, *without making any sound at all.*

Pause on the full breath.

Gently exhale. Repeat at least three times.

Held Exhalation Breath

Gently inhale through your nose.

Gently exhale through your mouth only to the point where another inhalation would feel natural.

Hold on "empty" for 20 to 30 seconds.

Relax the body.

Become used to the discomfort.

Resume normal breathing only after the discomfort becomes intolerable.

Repeat at least three times.

The Art of Breathing

Breathing exercises
to enhance your well-being.
By Riley Lee




Dr. Riley Lee, ethnomusicologist and Grand Master of the *shakuhachi* (traditional bamboo flute), has developed these simple exercises through more than two decades of teaching and performing experience.

The purpose of these exercises is to make you immediately aware of your breath.

Assumptions underlying these exercises:

- * There is a healthy way to breathe.
- * Most of us do not breathe in this way.
- * Simple breathing exercises can benefit almost everyone on both physical and metaphysical levels.
- * Better breath awareness leads to better control over all aspects of your life.



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