

## Yoga Tools for Better Breathers

Several studies have been conducted world-wide showing that yoga interventions provide benefits to folks with COPD and other pulmonary issues. Some benefits include: reduced stress, improved oxygen intake, stimulates the release of prostaglandins in the lungs, and improves the efficiency of respiratory muscles.



Participants in several studies did breath practice for 30 minutes, twice daily. You will want to work up to that, try starting for 5 minutes of breath practice, 3 times daily.

### 1) **Breath to focus the mind**

- a) Regulates brain chemistry to improve ability to focus.
- b) *Step Breathing*:
  - i) Sit comfortably, with a tall spine.
  - ii) Inhale a tiny inhale in.
  - iii) Pause.
  - iv) Continue to inhale a tiny inhale, followed by a pause, until it feels like you have a full inhale.
  - v) Pause for a few moments, don't strain to hold longer.
  - vi) Exhale gently, as fully as comfortable, through the nose.
  - vii) Continue.

### 2) **Breath for Calming**

- a) Regulates nervous system, reducing anxiety.
- b) *Square Breathing*:
  - i) Sit comfortably, with a tall spine.
  - ii) Bring awareness to the breath.
  - iii) Count to yourself:
    - (i) How long is inhale?
    - (ii) How long is exhale?
  - iv) What change to the breath needs to happen to make inhale and exhale the same?
    - (i) Speed up inhale?
    - (ii) Slow down exhale?
    - (iii) Both?
- (2) Bring inhale and exhale to the same length.
- (3) Add a pause at the top of the inhale:
  - (i) As long as is comfortable
  - (ii) No longer than the inhale was
- (4) Add a pause at the bottom of the exhale:

- (i) As long as is comfortable
- (ii) No longer than the inhale was

(5) Continue

(6) **Breath for capacity**

c) **Breath for capacity**

- i) Improving efficiency of respiratory muscles.
- ii) *Smell the Roses / Blow Bubbles*
  - (1) Sit comfortably, with a tall spine.
  - (2) Bring awareness to the breath.
  - (3) Inhale as deeply as is comfortable, as if you're smelling something wonderful.
  - (4) Exhale out as fully as comfortable, as if you're blowing bubbles using a bubble wand. Don't strain to exhale.
  - (5) Continue
  - (6)

1. **Breath for capability**

- 1. Improving the strength of diaphragmatic breathing
- 2. *Lion Breath, with movement*
  - Sit or stand with wide legs, feet turned out slightly, and a tall spine
  - Inhale and lift arms up and overhead
  - Pause at the top of the inhale
  - Stick out the tongue and at the same time:
    - Exhale forcefully out through the open mouth, constricting the throat to
    - Bend the elbows, bringing the arms down to shoulder height
    - \*If Standing, bend knees out, dropping down tailbone while lifting in the belly
  - Big inhale through the nose while bringing the arms back overhead and lengthening through the legs, if standing.
  - Continue for several rounds, be mindful of feeling dizzy!
    - If you do feel dizzy using the Lion's Breath, you can focus instead on exhaling out with a hissing sound, through the teeth, while focusing on using the diaphragm to assist the exhale.