

LONG DEEP BREATHING

Long Deep Breathing (Yogic Breath)

Long Deep Breathing is the first technique to teach beginners, after they have learned Simple, Natural Breathing. Long Deep Breathing uses the full capacity of the lungs, by utilizing the three chambers of the lungs:

- ▶ Abdominal or lower
- ▶ Chest or middle
- ▶ Clavicular or upper

Long Deep Breathing starts by filling the abdomen, then expanding the chest, and finally lifting the upper ribs and clavicle. The exhale is the reverse: first the upper deflates, then the middle, and finally the abdomen pulls in and up, as the Navel Point pulls back toward the spine.

Teaching the parts of Long Deep Breathing

First have the student practice by separating the three parts of the breath. Sit straight on the floor, in a chair, or lie on the back. (When teaching beginners, starting out on the back is a good idea.) Initially have the left hand on the belly, right hand on the chest to feel the movement of the diaphragm.

1. Abdominal Breath: Let the breath relax to a normal pace and depth. Bring your attention to the Navel Point area. Take a slow deep breath by letting the belly relax and expand. As you exhale, gently pull the navel in and up toward the spine. For this experiment, keep the chest relaxed. Focus on breathing entirely with the lower abdomen.

The diaphragm muscle separates the chest and thoracic cavity from the abdominal cavity and intestines. The diaphragm is a sheet of muscle that is normally in a dome shape. As you relax the diaphragm and extend the belly, the dome flattens and extra space is created to expand the lungs above it. When you exhale, the dome is re-created and the air from the lower lungs is pushed up and out. This pushing allows a portion of the lower lungs to be used efficiently.

Place one hand on the Navel Point and one on the center of the chest. On the inhale, raise the hand on the navel toward the ceiling. On the exhale lower it steadily. With your hand, monitor the chest to stay still and relaxed. Very soon you will notice all the muscles involved in this motion.

2. Chest Breath: Sit straight and keep the diaphragm still. Do not let the abdomen extend. Inhale slowly using the chest muscles. The chest expands by using the intercostal muscles between the ribs. Do this slowly and focus on the sensation of expansion. Exhale completely but do not use the abdomen. Compare the depth and volume of this breath with the isolated abdominal breath. If you place your hands on the top and bottom parts of the ribs you can feel how the bottom ribs move more than the top ones. They are the floating ribs and are not as fixed as the upper ones are to the sternum. So much of the contribution of the ribs and intercostal muscles comes from an expansion out to the sides of the lower ribs.

3. Clavicular Breath: Sit straight. Contract the navel in and keep the abdomen tight. Lift the chest without inhaling. Now inhale slowly by expanding the shoulders and the collarbone. Exhale as you keep the chest lifted.

Putting the parts together. Each part of the breath expansion is distinct. If all three are combined, you have a complete Long Deep Breath.

- ▶ Sit straight. If the spine is in a balanced position, the ribs and muscles can move freely.
- ▶ Begin the inhale with an Abdominal Breath. Then add the Chest Breath and finish with a Clavicular Breath. All three are done in a smooth motion.
- ▶ Start the exhale by relaxing the clavicle, then slowly emptying the chest. Finally, pull in the abdomen to force out any remaining air.

Benefits of Long Deep Breathing

- ▶ Relaxes and calms, due to influence on parasympathetic nervous system.
- ▶ Increases the flow of *prana*.
- ▶ Reduces and prevents the build-up of toxins in the lungs by encouraging the clearing of the small air sacs (alveoli.)
- ▶ Stimulates the brain chemicals—endorphins—that help fight depression.
- ▶ Brings the brain to a new level of alertness.
- ▶ Pumps the spinal fluid to the brain, giving greater energy.
- ▶ Breathing long and deep, plus concentration, stimulates the pituitary gland to secrete, enhancing the intuition.
- ▶ Filling the lungs to capacity revitalizes and re-adjusts the magnetic field.
- ▶ Cleanses the blood.
- ▶ Regulates the body's pH (acid-alkaline balance), which affects the ability to handle stressful situations.
- ▶ Energizes, and increases vitality.
- ▶ Aids in releasing blockages in meridian energy flow.
- ▶ Activates and clears the nerve channels.
- ▶ Aids in speeding up emotional and physical healing.
- ▶ Aids in breaking subconscious habit patterns such as insecurities and fears.
- ▶ Aids in fighting addictions.
- ▶ Re-channels previous mental conditioning on pain so as to reduce or eliminate pain, (for example, in childbirth.)
- ▶ Gives capacity to manage negativity and emotions, supporting clarity, cool-headedness, and patience.



Inhale Sat • Exhale Naam