



Breathing and Getting Ready for Sleep

These tips are from the book “The Energy Prescription” by Constance Grauds, R.Ph. and Doug Childers:

Page 52 “Breathing is the key that unlocks the whole catalog of advanced biological function and development. Is it any wonder that it is so central to every aspect of health?”

Sheldon Saul Hendler, M.D., Ph.D., *Oxygen Breakthrough*

Page 58 “Deep diaphragmatic breathing stimulates the cleansing of the lymph system by creating a vacuum effect which pulls the lymph through the bloodstream. This increases the rate of toxic elimination by as much as 15 times the normal rate.”

J.W. Shields M.S., Lymph, lymph glands, and homeostasis *Lymphology*, v25, n4, Dec. 1992, p. 147

Page 59 “Twenty minutes a day of deep breathing exercises clearly, dramatically escalates athletic performance and is the single most important factor in the effectiveness of all exercise.”

U.S. Olympic Training Committee

“The brain and the lungs are the only major organs subject to both voluntary and involuntary control. Exercising limited control over both organs can produce extraordinary benefits, dramatically increasing our energy and health. The most beneficial exercise of the lungs is what yogis call “complete breathing.”

“Complete breathing directly and fully exercises the respiratory system in a way that even vigorous aerobics does not. Aerobics exercises the respiratory system indirectly, and the oxygen drawn in is immediately burned up through physical exertion. But as complete breathing is practiced in stillness, the lungs and respiratory system receive a full workout and the superabundant oxygen drawn in is distributed throughout the body.”

“Complete breathing raises the shoulders and gently stretches the ribs and the musculature of the chest, the back, and the spine. The full expansion of the lungs, stomach, abdomen, and diaphragm massages, directly and indirectly, most of the body’s major organs. The full expansion of the spongy lung sacs allows freshly oxygenated blood to pour through all of the honeycomb air cells, cleansing wastes and toxins that otherwise collect there through chronic shallow breathing. The increased efficiency of the lungs and oxygenation of the blood reduce the heart’s workload, improve its functioning, lower blood pressure, and extend a healthy life span. Complete breathing even tones and rejuvenates the skin, which becomes clearer and healthier. It may even reduce wrinkles.”

“Complete breathing also stimulates and saturates the brain with oxygen, altering your state of consciousness in minutes, uplifting your mood, producing calmness, clarity, and a sense of vitality. Studies show that slow, deep, measured breathing can reduce anxiety and depression and even PMS and menopausal hot flashes!”

Page 61 “Complete breathing, done correctly, yields many benefits. Within minutes it slows the heart rate, lowers blood pressure, relaxes the body, relieves stress and anxiety, and calms and clears the mind.”



“One Complete Breath Cycle”

“One cycle of the complete breath is: a full inhalation, lasting eight to twelve seconds, with a prolonged retention; and a full exhalation lasting eight to twelve seconds, with a prolonged ‘empty retention.’ There is no one correct rhythm of breathing in terms of seconds counted for inhalation, exhalation, and retention. The important thing is that your breathing be slow, measured, full, and relaxed.”

“Both inhale and exhale is comprised of three parts done in one slow, fluid motion. Inhale from bottom to top and fill up the abdomen through the chest. And exhale from top to bottom, emptying the chest down through the abdomen, according to the instructions below.”

“Complete Breathing Instructions”

1. Inhale slowly through the nose, breathing into the lower belly and allowing it to expand and swell forward.
2. When the belly is full, continue inhaling so that the middle area of the solar plexus expands and rises. (You will notice that the shoulders also naturally rise and the spine straightens with the breath).
3. Continue inhaling, allowing the breath to rise into the chest and the upper lungs. Notice how the chest rises and expands with the breath. Inhale to the point of fullness, but not to the point of unpleasant discomfort.
4. Hold the in-breath for eight to twelve seconds. Feel a radiant energy charging your body.
5. Begin exhaling through the nose. Let your chest fall as you release the breath from the top down.
6. When the air is exhaled from the chest, begin to press in the solar plexus and force the air out of it.
7. With the solar plexus emptied, complete the exhale by pressing in the lower stomach and abdomen until all of the air is expelled.
8. Hold the out-breath for eight to twelve seconds.
9. Repeat the entire cycle twelve to twenty-four times. When you have finished, sit quietly for several minutes, feeling the sense of deep relaxation and peace that comes when the body is fully oxygenated in this way.

To help relax at night, the old-fashioned glass of hot milk does work. Take a hot shower and go into a cool bedroom and your body will naturally go into that normal sleep cycle. Lay in bed and do the “Complete Breathing” described above while visualizing that you are on a warm beach or whatever place is relaxing for you and you will feel very relaxed and your mind will calm. Keep your self-talk positive and tell yourself that you are going to sleep now and you will not be thinking about the cares of the world until the next day after a good night’s sleep.

Grauds, C., Childers, D. (2005) *The Energy Prescription: Give Yourself Abundant Vitality with the Wisdom of America's Leading Natural Pharmacist*. New York, NY: Bantam Book