Breath Exercise



“A simple practice to assist in calming, creating space in one’s life to re-charge”

Focusing on the breath can assist in calming. It has an effect on calming the parasympathetic nervous system. This is full and deep breath or diaphragmatic breath; deepening the breath. To focus on the breath is to enter into sensation. It is not thinking about the breath but feeling the breath as you breathe. The breath is usually felt at the tips of the nostrils and in the belly rising. In essence you are moving from thought to sensation. It is a practice like meditation, whenever you find yourself thinking, you return to the ‘feel’ of your breath. Feel the air as it moves through the nostrils, in and out. Or place a hand on the belly to feel the belly rise and fall. Those who teach breath work suggest that the exhale begins the cycle of the breath. The idea is that if we can release the air fully, we will breathe in more fully.

Lengthening the exhalation is a way to calm the body. This is not forced but done rather gradually, following the breath as it moves in and out.

Since most of the culture breathes primarily from the upper chest, we move toward deepening the breath slowly by noticing how we breathe and then gradually working with lengthening the exhalation. Ten to fifteen minutes of this practice twice a day can have a significant impact on staying centered, maintaining balance and increasing awareness and perspective.

Research has shown that when heart attack survivors generalized deepening the breath in their lives, they avoided a second heart attack. Deep and full breath has many benefits.

*Begin by being aware of your breath. Noticing for instance how many counts for the in breath How many for the out breath? Then gradually work with deepening the breath... Slowly lengthening the exhalation or just practice following the breath*

*In spiritual traditions, many will use a mantra with the breath. This another practice. The Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh taught first the mantra: Breathing in I calm my body. Breathing out I smile.*