

Breath and Energy Practices

What are Breath and Energy Practices?

Breath and energy practices involve controlled breathing techniques and awareness of internal energy flow to promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These practices, rooted in ancient traditions like yoga and qigong, enhance relaxation, focus, and overall vitality (Brown & Gerbarg, 2005).

Benefits of Breath and Energy Practices

- Reduces stress and anxiety (Jerath et al., 2006).
- Improves oxygenation and lung function (Russo et al., 2017).
- Enhances emotional regulation and mental clarity (Zaccaro et al., 2018).
- Balances autonomic nervous system responses (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009).

How to Practice Breath and Energy Techniques

1. **Find a Quiet Space:** Sit or lie down in a comfortable position in a peaceful environment.
2. **Focus on the Breath:** Begin by observing your natural breathing pattern.
3. **Engage in a Breath Technique:** Use one of the guided techniques below.
4. **Incorporate Energy Awareness:** Visualize breath energy moving through the body.
5. **Conclude with Stillness:** Allow a few moments to absorb the effects before resuming normal activities.

Client Exercises for Breath and Energy Practices

Exercise 1: Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen.
- Inhale deeply through the nose, expanding the belly while keeping the chest still.
- Exhale slowly through the mouth.
- Repeat for 5–10 minutes.

Exercise 2: Alternate Nostril Breathing (Nadi Shodhana)

- Close the right nostril with your thumb and inhale through the left nostril.
- Close the left nostril with your ring finger and exhale through the right nostril.
- Inhale through the right nostril, then switch and exhale through the left.

Breath and Energy Practices

- Repeat for 5 minutes.

Exercise 3: Breath of Fire (Kapalabhati)

- Sit upright and take a deep inhale.
- Exhale rapidly and forcefully through the nose while contracting the abdomen.
- Continue rhythmic, short exhalations while allowing passive inhalations.
- Practice for 1–2 minutes.

Exercise 4: Microcosmic Orbit Energy Circulation

- Sit in a meditative posture and inhale deeply.
- Visualize energy moving up the spine with each inhale.
- Exhale and imagine energy flowing down the front of the body.
- Continue for 5–10 minutes.

Tracking Your Progress

Keeping a log of breath and energy practices can help you observe shifts in focus, relaxation, and overall well-being. Use the table below to track your experiences:

[illegible]

Breath and Energy Practices

Reflection Questions:

- Did you notice any changes in your energy levels or emotions?
 - How did each technique affect your mental clarity and relaxation?
 - Which practice felt the most beneficial for you?
-

References

- Brown, R. P., & Gerbarg, P. L. (2005). Sudarshan Kriya yogic breathing in the treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression: Part I—neurophysiologic model. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 11(1), 189-201.
- Brown, R. P., & Gerbarg, P. L. (2009). Yoga breathing, meditation, and longevity. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1172(1), 54-62.
- Jerath, R., Edry, J. W., Barnes, V. A., & Jerath, V. (2006). Physiology of long pranayamic breathing: Neural, respiratory, and cardiovascular correlates. *Medical Hypotheses*, 67(3), 566-571.
- Russo, M. A., Santarelli, D. M., & O'Rourke, D. (2017). The physiological effects of slow breathing in the healthy human. *Breathe*, 13(4), 298-309.
- Zaccaro, A., Piarulli, A., Laurino, M., Garbella, E., Menicucci, D., Neri, B., & Gemignani, A. (2018). How breath-control can change your life: A systematic review on psychophysiological correlates of slow breathing. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 12, 353.