

Deep Breathing Exercises

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Holistic Health Report

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Deep Breathing Exercises

*The Most Effective, Natural Way to
Increase Energy, Improve Sleep,
Reduce Stress, Relax & More*

Matthew Scott B.Ac, MA

Deep Breathing Exercises

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Feel free to pass this report on to anyone you know who wants to improve their health and wellbeing.

About the author

Matthew Scott is a professionally trained Chinese medicine practitioner from Australia. In 2000, after ten years in professional practice, Matthew went to China to further his studies and immerse himself in the culture for a few months. He's been there ever since. Matthew regularly practices all the breathing techniques in this report.

Visit Matthew's website for more classic Chinese exercises, techniques and exercise programs.

www.chinese-holistic-health-exercises.com

Note: The information in this report is not intended to replace advice, diagnoses or treatment from your doctor or other health professional. Always consult your doctor or health professional before starting or changing any dietary or exercise program.

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Introduction

The overall aim of Matthew Scott's Holistic Health Reports is to provide you with simple, practical, effective ways to take greater control of your health and wellbeing. Deep breathing exercises are one such method. Other reports by Matthew Scott are listed at the end of this report.

Deep breathing exercises are a simple, powerful, indispensable way to improve and maintain your physical, mental and emotional health. Eastern martial artists, medical practitioners and yogis have known this for thousands of years. While very few Western doctors recognize the therapeutic power of deep breathing, increasing numbers of everyday Westerners from all walks of life *are* discovering its enormous health benefits.

An outline of the benefits of deep breathing exercises is on page 5 of this report. Page 4 explains why you should do deep breathing exercises. Page 6 details a little known fact that deep breathing while exercising can help you lose weight faster. Page 7 introduces 5 breathing exercises and techniques you can start using immediately to improve your health - daily practice of just one or two of these techniques is enough to set you on the path to greater health and vitality *today*. On page 9 you'll find a sample breathing program and tips for getting best results.

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Why do Deep Breathing Exercises?

Quite simply - your body and mind are intimately connected, and doing controlled, deep breathing exercises has a therapeutic, balancing influence on your mental/emotional state.

Here's how you can test this body-mind relationship: Next time you're angry, upset or emotionally stressed, take a moment to notice your breathing – it will be faster, shallower and less regular than normal, and your heart may be beating erratically too. When you're relaxed, though, notice how your breathing is smooth and even and your heart is calm.

If emotional turmoil and stress, etc, negatively affect your breathing, then it stands to reason that practicing slow, deep breathing, i.e. correct breathing, will positively affect your emotions and your mind. That's exactly what happens when you establish a daily routine of breathing exercises, i.e. you feel calmer, more balanced *and* a growing sense of inner wellbeing, which flows over into all areas of your life.

While you may think you're already calm enough and don't need to do deep breathing exercises, there are a host of other benefits that virtually *everyone* needs. And if you think good health is only about having a strong, toned, flexible body, you're missing a major part of the picture -complete, harmonious health is only possible if your mind and your emotions are also balanced. Daily, deep breathing exercises are *the* best way to achieve and maintain this.

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Benefits of Deep Breathing Exercises

Most people think that as breathing is an automatic process we automatically do it *properly*. Not so. We start out breathing correctly – by expanding our abdomen on inhalation and contracting it on exhalation (just watch a baby breathe) – but this changes. As mentioned, breathing is intimately connected to our mental/emotional state. As we age and become more susceptible to stress, worry, anger and other negative emotions, our breathing becomes shallow, fast and irregular, leading to and exacerbating acute *and* chronic health problems.

Fortunately, the regular practice of controlled, deep breathing can reverse this pattern *and* provide many additional benefits, as outlined below.

Most people are shallow breathers – various stresses and strains from work, family life, relationships, city living, smoking and other factors are the main culprits. However, people who know how to breathe slowly and deeply, utilize their diaphragm, a muscular membrane separating the lungs and stomach. When you inhale deeply and expand your abdomen, your diaphragm automatically moves down; as you exhale it moves back up. This up and down action is like a pump. Slow, deep, diaphragmatic breathing is easy to learn and offers the following benefits if you set aside just 10-20 minutes daily:

- Massages your abdominal organs, which
- Improves digestion, metabolism & bowel movements.
- Takes stress off your heart by assisting blood circulation
- Calms & relaxes you, which
- Improves your ability to handle stress.
- Enhances sleep quality & reduces the amount of sleep you need each night
- Improves your memory & decision making & helps you think clearer
- Improves work, sports, exercise & sexual performance
- Energizes you
- Balances your mind & emotions
- Helps you become more flexible & toned
- Helps you lose weight

Naturally, you'll need to verify the benefits for yourself. Certain benefits you'll experience right away, however it may take 3 months to experience the full power of deep breathing. You will *not* regret the time you invest though. Of primary importance is *daily* practice – 15 minutes a day is more beneficial than say 30 minutes, 3 times a week. Also, the effects are often subtle *and* they accumulate; after 3 months of daily practice you *will* be a different person, physically, mentally and emotionally.

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Deep Breathing to Lose Weight

How does deep breathing help you lose weight? Deep breathing while exercising increases oxygenation of your system, which boosts your metabolism, which in turn helps your body burn fat. One deep breathing technique to help you lose excess belly fat is the bellows or cleansing breath. This exercise uses forceful abdominal contractions to expel stale air from your lungs and breathing passages. The combination of deep breathing and abdominal contractions also happens to tighten your abs and belly. For illustrated instructions and tips on how to do the Bellows, see: <http://chinese-holistic-health-exercises.com/exercises-for-toning-stomach.html>

Another exercise in which deep breathing tightens your abs and belly is the Forward-Backward Bend. This superb exercise not only benefits your abs and belly, it also stretches and strengthens your back and legs, relaxes *and* energizes you, and improves blood flow to your head and face. For full instructions including photos and tips, see: <http://chinese-holistic-health-exercises.com/abdominal-stretching.html>

For toning your thighs and butt, do slow, deep breathing during the Thigh Burner. This exercise not only tones, stretches and strengthens your thighs, it also strengthens your lower back and pelvic area, which improves your sexual performance too. Here's how: <http://chinese-holistic-health-exercises.com/inner-thigh-exercises.html>

The Bellows, Forward-Backward Bend and Thigh Burner are three excellent examples of how you can combine exercise and deep breathing to lose weight while also toning, tightening and strengthening specific body areas. Slow, leisurely walking while concentrating on smooth, deep breathing through your nose also helps you lose weight, *and* it's a calming, balancing and highly beneficial therapy in itself.

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Some Indispensable Deep Breathing Exercises

1. **Bellows or Cleansing Breath:** Already mentioned above as a way to help you lose weight, this breathing exercise is primarily for **clearing your lungs and airways** of stale air and flooding your system with fresh oxygen. The surge of fresh oxygen into your system energizes and relaxes you and clears your head. All smokers and city-dwellers should do it several times a day. The bellows also helps prevent colds and sinus problems.
2. **Eagle Breath:** This exercise is done standing. It synchronizes slow, fluid arm movements with slow, deep breathing to **boost blood circulation, energize and relax you**, and is a great way to start your day. For illustrated instructions on how to do the Bellows (above) and the Eagle Breath, see: <http://chinese-holistic-health-exercises.com/do-breathing-exercises-at-home.html>
3. **4-7-8 Breath:** Here's a very simple, effective deep breathing technique you can use **anytime you feel anxious or nervous**. If you practice regularly it can also prevent these problems. Another benefit of the 4-7-8 breath is that you can do it virtually anywhere – on a bus or plane, even standing in a line somewhere. Here's exactly how to do it: <http://chinese-holistic-health-exercises.com/anxiety-breathing-techniques.html>
4. **Breath of Fire:** This technique rapidly **raises your energy levels**. Also known as Circular Breathing.
 - Sit with back straight, face and shoulders relaxed and hands in your lap, **or** lie down on your back, hands resting on your abdomen. All breathing is done through your nose only.
 - Do 5-10 quick, continuous, shallow, in/out breaths. Push your abdomen out as you inhale - pull it in as you exhale.
 - Without pausing after the final exhalation, take a long, slow, deep, breath then let it go in a long, slow, complete exhalation.
 - Immediately begin another round of 5-10 quick, continuous, shallow breaths, followed by a long, slow, complete inhalation and exhalation.
 - Do several rounds a couple of times day and whenever you need a boost.

Note: During the exercise you may experience slight dizziness, shaking or tingling sensations in your body. This is normal at first and it's also why you shouldn't do it standing. These symptoms will gradually stop as you become used to the exercise. If you persist you *will* be rewarded with greater energy *and* a more balanced mood.

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5. **Sleep Inducer:** As the name implies, this breathing exercise **helps you sleep**. It's an extremely simple method that teaches you how to focus on your breathing, so you fall asleep relatively quickly. It does take some practice though, especially if you have chronic sleep problems.
- Lie in bed on your back with your hands by your sides or resting on your abdomen.
Your body should be fairly flat, so if you have a high pillow, remove it. Breathe slowly, smoothly and deeply through your nose throughout the exercise. As you breathe in gently expand your abdomen; as you breathe out, let your abdomen fall back into place.
 - All you have to do is mentally count your breaths up to ten. You can either count your inhalations or your exhalations. Here's the catch – *every* time your mind wanders and you lose count, you *must* start from one again. Each time you reach ten, start at one again. Continue like this and you *will* fall asleep.
 - Focusing your mind in this way (and penalizing it by restarting the count each time your thoughts stray), together with slow, deep breathing forms a powerful sleep inducing method. Do it every night, whether you have sleep problems or not, as it will also improve the quality of your sleep *and* reduce the amount of sleep you need.

As everyone is unique and has different needs and requirements, it is recommended that you try all the above deep breathing exercises to see which ones work best in *your* particular situations. The key is daily practice of at least one or two exercises, for a minimum of 10-20 minutes a day. Incorporate deep breathing exercises into your daily life and you *will* be rewarded with many of the benefits mentioned. For your convenience, a sample breathing program is included below.

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Sample Program

Start your day with:

- Bellows Breath (2-3 minutes)
- Eagle Breath (10-20m)

Anytime during the day when you feel tired, sluggish, dull-headed:

- Bellows Breath (2-3m) and/or
- Breath of Fire (2-3m)

Anytime you feel anxious or nervous:

- Bellows (2-3m) and/or
- 4-7-8 Breath (2-3m) and/or
- Eagle Breath (10-20m)

At night in bed to help you sleep:

- Sleep Inducer (until you fall asleep)

Tips for best results

- Choose a place for breathing exercises that's well ventilated but not too windy. Outside is best, but on a porch or verandah, or by an open window is also suitable.
- The place should also be as quiet as possible; earplugs are useful if you can't find somewhere quiet enough. Slow, relaxing, background music also helps eliminate noise and helps set the mood, especially if your goal is relaxation and stress relief.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes and take off or loosen your belt and anything else that might restrict blood flow.
- Try to stick to specific times for practice, e.g. before breakfast and before bed each day.
- Be patient – many effects are very subtle, but they accumulate with each session you do.
- Remember, *daily* practice is the key to getting maximum benefits from deep breathing exercises!

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Tips for best results

If you think you don't have a spare 10-20 minutes to do breathing exercises, especially first thing in the morning... make the time! You'll soon notice the benefits flowing over into everything you do during the day, improving your ability to work, handle stress, deal with people, think and act positively, and more.

To Your Health!

Matthew Scott B.Ac, MA

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of Natural Medicine (Brisbane), 1990

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who wants to improve their health and wellbeing.

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