

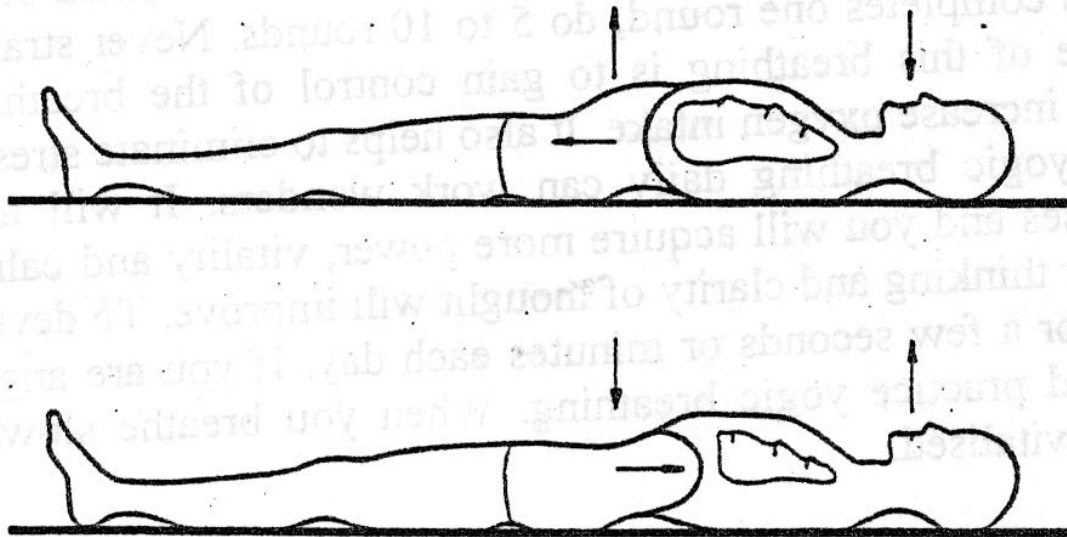
Yogic Breathing \ The Complete Breath

There are three stages to the complete breath. First lie in Shavasana and allow the body to settle and to become quiet. Observe the natural and spontaneous breath. Do not control the breath in any way. Just watch the breath coming and going and repeat to yourself, my body is breathing in, my body is breathing out. After some time start:

Stage 1 Abdominal Breathing

Place the right hand palm down just above the navel. As you breathe in to the bottom of the lungs the right hand rises and as you breathe out the right hand moves down. As you inhale the abdomen expands without expanding the rib cage as the diaphragm moves down. As you exhale the diaphragm moves upward and the abdomen goes down toward the spine. Pause after inhalation and after exhalation. Continue for a few minutes. Abdominal breathing is the most natural and efficient way to breath. Due to tension, poor posture and restrictive clothing it is often forgotten. This type of breathing restores good physical and mental wellbeing.

Technique 1 : Natural abdominal breathing



Stage 2 Thoracic Breathing - Middle Chest Breathing

Lie in Shavasana, again watch the body breathing naturally for some time. Then place both hands on the chest palms flat, right hand is on the right side fingers to the centre, at the end of the breast bone(sternum) and the left hand on the opposite side in the same place, the fingertips touch. Now breathe into the middle of the chest, feel the movement of the ribs as they go upwards and outwards and the fingertips go apart. Expand the

chest as much as possible without straining and as you exhale the rib cage contracts as the air leaves the lungs and fingertips come together. Exhale slowly releasing the rib cage. Continue for a few breaths observing the effect of this type of breathing. You are now breathing in and out of the middle of the chest. You are not using the diaphragm. Thoracic breathing utilises the middle of the lungs.

Stage 3 Clavicular Breathing - Upper Chest Breathing

Lie in Shavasana, allow the body to settle. Perform thoracic breathing for a few minutes then place the right hand's thumb on the right collar bone (clavicle) and the index and middle fingers on the left collar bone with the palm resting in the middle. Then inhale fully into the middle of the chest and when the ribs are fully expanded inhale a little more and you may feel the collarbones rise a little. Here you are inhaling into the upper portion of the lungs. This takes a little effort but don't force it. Exhale slowly first releasing the upper chest then the rib cage. Continue for a few breaths observing the effects.

The Complete Breath

Lie in Shavasana, let the body settle, breathe naturally for a little while and then start with the abdominal breath, then expand the chest outward and upwards. When the ribs are fully expanded, inhale a little more until expansion is felt in the upper portion of the lungs around the base of the neck. This completes one inhalation. The whole process should be one continuous movement, each phase of breathing merging into the next without any obvious points, jerks or strains.

Now start to exhale, exhaling from the top down. The entire movement should be harmonious and flowing. Hold the breath for a few seconds at the end of the inhalation and exhalation. This completes one round, do 5 to 10 rounds. Never strain or force the breath. The purpose of this breathing is to gain control of the breath, correct poor breathing habits and increase oxygen intake. It also helps to eliminate stress and tension. A few minutes of yogic breathing daily can work wonders. It will make you less susceptible to illnesses and you will acquire more power, vitality and calmness in your daily activities. Your thinking and clarity of thought will improve. To develop the yogic breathing, practice for a few seconds or minutes each day. If you are angry or tired, lie down if possible and practice yogic breathing. When you breathe slowly your mind becomes calm and revitalised.