



## Breathing for Optimal Health

**Aim to practice this for 5 minutes per day until it becomes your regular, unconscious breathing pattern.**

### The Complete Breath:

#### I) **A Few of the Many Benefits:**

- Purifies and enriches the bloodstream, delivering oxygen to the entire body more efficiently.
- Develops the chest and diaphragm.
- Strengthens lungs, thorax and abdomen.
- Increases resistance to colds.
- Calms the nervous system and changes brain waves, promoting relaxation.
- Aids digestion.
- Clears up phlegm.
- Helps to lift mood.

#### II) **Technique:**

1. Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position or in a chair.
2. Straighten your back, which will straighten your thorax for easier breathing. Imagine there is a string pulling your head upwards.
3. Let your tongue rest on "the spot" (where your gums meet your 2 front teeth). Relax your jaw, lips closed.
4. Inhale slowly through the nose, breathing deeply, consciously.
5. **Send the breath down to the lower part of the lungs first.** Take five seconds to fill the lower part of the lungs, by **consciously expanding the ribs and pushing the abdomen out.**
6. Concentrate on filling the top of the lungs for the next five seconds. This will expand the chest and tighten the abdomen slightly.
7. Hold the breath for 1-5 seconds.
8. Exhale slowly until you have emptied the lungs.
9. Repeat 4-5 times more.
10. Gradually increase the length of time you take to inhale, hold, and exhale.
11. Smile throughout this exercise.

#### III) **Do's and Don'ts:**

DO establish a rhythmic rise and fall of your abdomen, to promote regular breathing.  
DO attempt to breathe inaudibly after you have gotten the knack of deep breathing.  
DO concentrate on your breathing alone, with your eyes closed, if you wish. It serves to do the technique better but it is also a preparation for meditation.  
DO push your abdomen out as you breathe in and pull the abdomen in as you breathe out.  
DO give an extra snort as you exhale to rid yourself of stale waste-matter in the bottom of the lungs. Feel free to giggle at yourself.  
DON'T slump. For maximum efficiency the thorax must be straight.  
DON'T create a feeling of light-headedness. Listen to the body  
DON'T allow these exercises to cause you added stress.