

INTEGRATIVE SOMATIC TOOLS – BREATHWORK

Ha Breath Technique

The Ha Breath is a very simple, very fast pause and release technique. Simply have your client take a deep inhale through the nose, drawing the breath all the way down into the belly, then opening the mouth and exhaling “Haaaaaaaaaaa.” Suggest that your client do this any time at the first sign of stress, tension, or negative emotions like anger or frustration, or anxiety.

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Belly Breath Technique (Yogic breathing)

The belly breath was the technique that we incorporated into the meditation that you did earlier. To have your clients begin belly breathing, simply have them sit in a comfortable position. Have them place their hands gently on their belly. Have them breathe in deep down into their belly. See if they feel their belly expand up against their hand. And as they exhale, fully releasing all of the breath out of the body, they should feel their hand collapsing, or releasing, with the belly as the belly lets go of the oxygen. Again, inhale drawing the breath all the way down into the belly; exhale fully, exhaling all of the breath from the body. And it's as simple as that. The Belly Breath can be a good breathing technique that can be done in just 1-2 minutes. Even taking 5-6 belly breaths in a row can have a physiological effect on the body, and on releasing stress.

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Merging the Two – Ha & Belly Breath Technique

And finally, we'll merge both of those breathing techniques together into the third combined technique. With this, we simply do 3 Ha Breaths and then shift the focus into one minute of belly breathing. What this does is a full pause, release, reset and redirect. This is a fantastic exercise for people who suffer from anxiety.

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Let's practice... 3 ha breaths. (Ha breath, ha breath, ha breath) And now, bringing the hands to the belly, we begin our belly breath. Deep inhale drawing the breath all the way down to the base of the belly, exhale fully releasing all of the air from the body. Deep inhale drawing the breath all the way down to the base of the belly, and exhale fully releasing all of the air from the body. And we continue this belly breath for one full minute. That's it. Now you have combined the two breath techniques into a third.

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Pranayama - Nadi Shodhana Technique (alternate nostril breathing)

Nadi Shodhana is pronounced naaḍii sho-dhuh-nuh. Nadi Shodhana aims to purify the main energy channels (nadis) to allow the body's life force, prana or chi to freely ascend throughout the body bringing about a harmonious state of being.

The translation of Nadi Shodhana is fairly straightforward. Nadi means “channel” and Shodhana means “purification.” So among many other things, the purpose is in the title, to purify or clear the channels of the subtle and physical body.

Interestingly in everyday life we do not breathe through both nostrils at a time on a constant basis. It is said that each nostril is dominant for a 2-hour cycle at a time. Breathing through one nostril for a prolonged period of time can affect energy levels, alternate nostril breathing helps restore balance.

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Benefits:

- increases oxygen levels in the body
- has a profound stilling effect on the mind
- grounds in the present moment
- can regulate energy levels by purifying the nadis
- can relieve anxiety and stress
- induces sense of tranquility
- may balance left and right side of the brain
- improves clarity of mind
- may help bring fresh inspiration
- increases focus and concentration
- improves ability to be present in the moment
- may remove minor blockages in nose and sinuses

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How to perform the technique:

Nadi shodhana can be immensely rewarding, even when practiced for as little as five minutes on a regular basis but practicing daily for 10–15 minutes offers even deeper benefits.

Place your thumb on your right nostril. With this nostril covered, close your eyes and exhale fully and slowly through your left nostril. Once you've exhaled completely, release your right nostril and put your ring finger on the left nostril. Breathe in deeply and slowly from the right side. When you are ready to close your practice, complete your final round of nadi shodhana with an exhalation through the left nostril.

Contraindication: Nadi Shodhana should not be practiced while suffering from cold, flu or fever.

<https://www.castleford-yoga.co.uk/2015/12/08/pranayama-series-nadi-shodhana-alternate-nostril-breathing/>

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