

Breathing properly – article from www.spiritualinspiration.co.uk

Caution!

You may experience light-headedness, headache or other similar symptoms when trying abdominal breathing - if you do - consult a health care professional before continuing.

Breathing properly and regulating our breathing pattern may be the single most important thing we can do to improve our health. Instead of inhaling into the upper chest, try deeper abdominal breathing. Find out how below.

Firstly, a brief mention of Qi Gong (chee kung)

Qi Gong (chee kung) is an ancient oriental method of building and balancing life energy through exercise focusing on the role of movement, proper breathing and concentration.

There is a wonderful book called "Qi Gong for beginners" by Stanley D Wilson ISBN 0915801752 - highly recommend if you wish to learn more about Qi Gong and also the practice of Pal Dan Gum which consists of eight gentle exercises for training the body, breath and mind for improved health and longevity.

Proper breathing is fundamental to ultimate health and well-being. By the end of this short section you will be able to breathe properly, feel more relaxed and improve your health dramatically and immediately.

The ancient masters summarised the keys to breath regulation in three words; slender, silent and deep.

Most of us take shallow and rapid breaths into the upper chest, only filling the upper portion of our lungs. Upper chest breathing sends stress signals to our brain whereas abdominal breathing sends okay signals telling us it is safe to relax. (Read more about that in the above book)

Proper breathing is the activity of taking and exchanging a maximum of air with a minimum of effort. Abdominal breathing is the key to proper breathing. Fortunately, as infants we breathe abdominally, so the process is hard-wired into the human organism - it is natural instinct and this makes it easy for us to re-learn how to breathe properly.

In abdominal breathing - inhalation is slow, drawing the breath deep down and making a complete exhalation before the next inhalation. Eight or less breaths per minute is considered ideal (half usual rates) Don't worry, you will not starve yourself of air - in fact just the opposite! It may feel strange at first yet after a day or two you will have retrained your breathing and feel better for it. Then, it is simply a case of recognising upper chest breathing to get back to abdominal breathing.

Abdominal breathing improves respiratory efficiency, optimizes heart rate and blood circulation. Deeper inhalation, a slower breathing rate and a larger volume of air in your lungs gives greater relaxation and improves functioning physically and mentally. It also cultivates a meditative state of stillness and tranquillity.

Abdominal breathing does not mean inhaling to bursting point and holding your breath! It means gently concentrating on slowing and deepening your inhalation painlessly.

Breathe deeply and imagine inflating a balloon just below the navel (or belly button). Your belly, lower back and chest will all expand. Pause for a moment when the balloon feels comfortably full, then let go and slowly exhale - imagining the balloon deflating until it is empty. No force, simply breathe slowly and deeply.

Eventually it becomes natural and automatic - improving your health instantly.

Maximizing benefits of abdominal breathing:

- (1) Slender - breathe through your nostrils whenever possible
- (2) Silent - breathe slowly and quietly
- (3) Deep - breathe deeply letting the breath sink way down into your abdomen
- (4) Empty - empty the lungs by making a thorough exhalation
- (5) Pause - pause momentarily between each inhalation and exhalation, and vice versa

Remember! No force - simply breathe slowly and deeply.

Some of the benefits of abdominal breathing:

Boosted energy levels

Improved stamina

Decreased heart rate and lower blood pressure

Increased blood flow and supply of oxygen to the heart, brain and other organs

Improved cellular regeneration

Activation of the relaxation response

Relief of tension and shutting off of stress hormones

Relief of headaches and anxiety disorders

Ability to achieve peace of mind

Bringing body and mind into harmony

Increase in immune system cells, promoting healing and strengthening resistance to disease

Increase of pleasure-inducing neurochemicals in the brain to elevate moods and combat physical pain

Further benefits can be gained in performing Qi Gong (chee kung)

Be aware of how good it feels to breathe!

EXERCISES:

Slow your breathing down

Tip for instant calm. Brilliant anywhere and useful in a stressful situation...

Watch a clock or wrist watch with a second hand and see if you can breath slowly and deeply enough to reduce your breathing right down by counting the seconds as you breath in and out....

Don't overdo it - start with a higher figure say 16 breaths, then 8 then 4 - breath as slowly and fully as you can (only do what feels comfortable, as everyone is different). Sense the relaxation that occurs in your body and mind as you slow your breathing down.

When you can breath twice in one minute you will be really relaxed!

This means breathing in for 15 seconds, breathing out for 15 seconds, breathing in again for 15 seconds, and breathing out for another 15 seconds. Only do this if it feels comfortable - no force, no effort and no straining.

Alpha State

Count down from 24 to 0 without interruption and without any thoughts entering your head. If you get interrupted start again! Once you have got to 0 your arms should feel light as you lift them - if they do you are in what is known as Alpha state - instant relaxation! After practice it works brilliantly and you can do it anywhere!

Centre Yourself

A surprisingly simple exercise that also works well is to breathe in, in one long slow breath and concentrate on the area a couple of inches below your navel (or belly button). This quickly centres your whole body and relaxes you immediately. You can do this anytime for an instant calming effect.

Only breathe up your left nostril!

Now the title has gripped you here is a great way to keep your cool! This technique comes from a book called "Instant Life Coach - 200 Brilliant Ways To Be Your Best" by Lynda Field ISBN 0091906709

Don't laugh; research shows our emotional states can be controlled by tuning into the different hemispheres of the brain. When we breathe through our left nostril we are connecting with the right side of our brain, which controls our receptive, spiritual and inner awareness.

Try it now and the next time you are hot and bothered - it will cool you down so that you can think straight.

(1) Right thumb over right nostril, just lightly closing it off

(2) Exhale. Inhale slowly through left nostril for twenty complete breaths. Keep mouth closed. Make breaths as long and smooth as you can. Each time you exhale let go of any tension, hurt, anger, irritability and negative emotions. Visualise these emotions draining out of your body so that you feel clear and positive.

(3) You may have to excuse yourself for a few moments to do this. It's also useful on the telephone when it is possible to do it without being detected.

Breathing Mind Map follows:

X UPPER CHEST BREATHING

SENDS "STRESS" SIGNALS TO BRAIN

ABDOMINAL BREATHING

SENDS "OK" SIGNALS

"SAFE TO RELAX"

BENEFITS

- LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE
- LOWER HEART RATE
- RELIEVES TENSION - HEADACHES AND ANXIETY
- INCREASED IMMUNE SYSTEM
- IMPROVES LUNG EFFICIENCY
- OPTIMIZES HEART
- IMPROVES BLOOD CIRCULATION
- BOOSTS ENERGY
- IMPROVES STAMINA

8 OR LESS BREATHS PER MINUTE
CONSIDERED IDEAL

1/2 NORMAL RATES

"NORMAL" MEANING LAZY HABIT!

EASY TO RETRAIN BREATHING

DO WHAT IS COMFORTABLE

NO STRAINING

DON'T STRESS YOUR BODY

RELAX IT

* REMEMBER THE CAUTION ABOVE *

DO NOT OVERDO IT
TAKE IT EASY

MAXIMUM AIR

MINIMUM EFFORT

- NATURAL
- RELAXED
- EASY
- GENTLE
- FREE
- IMMEDIATE
- FEELS GOOD
- NO FIGHTING
- NO FORCING
- NO STRAINING

BREATHING PROPERLY

* CAUTION! *

YOU MAY EXPERIENCE
LIGHTEADEDNESS

HEADACHE OR SIMILAR
WHEN TRYING ABDOMINAL

BREATHING: IF SO

CONSULT A
HEALTHCARE
PROFESSIONAL
BEFORE
CONTINUING

ABDOMINAL BREATHING
IMPROVES HEALTH

RELAXATION

WELLBEING

PEACE OF MIND

IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

KEY AREAS

KEY AREAS

SLENDER

SILENT

DEEP

EMPTY

PAUSE

NO FORCE

GREATER RELAXATION
IMPROVED BODY FUNCTIONING
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
THINK CLEARLY
MEDITATIVE STATE
STILLNESS
TRANQUILITY

DRAW AIR INTO NAVEL AREA
IMAGINE INFLATING BALLOON
LOWER BACK AND CHEST EXPAND
PAUSE MOMENTARILY
COMFORTABLY FULL
LET GO - EXHALE
IMAGINE BALLOON DEFLATING
NO FORCE
SLOW
FILL FULLY
RELAXED

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To see more Mind Maps by Paul Foreman visit the
Mind Map Inspiration Website www.mindmapinspiration.co.uk

and

Subscribe to the Mind Map Inspiration Blog to receive
new Mind Maps, plus creativity and drawing tips.

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Mindmaps ® were invented by Tony Buzan

They help us progress from "linear" (one-dimensional) through
"lateral" (two-dimensional) to "radiant" (multi-dimensional) thinking.

For more information see his books and visit the following websites:

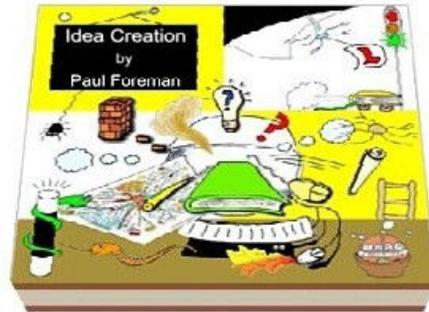
www.buzanworld.com

www.imindmap.com

Available from <http://www.mindmapinspiration.co.uk>

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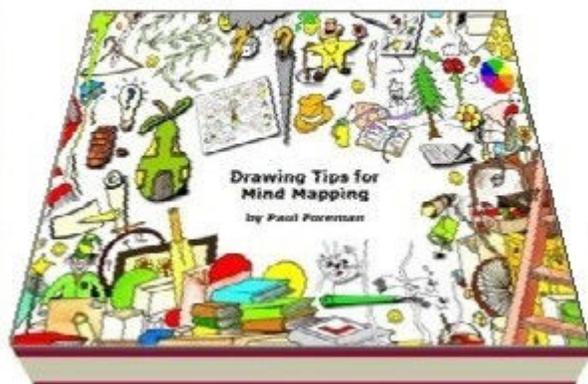
Why simple is often best
Fresh ideas
Use thinking – don't let it use you
Lifespan of an idea
Simplicity of an idea
Everything stems from a thought
Planning ahead and the bigger picture
Sparking ideas
Random thinking styles
Creativity Toolkit
Outside the box outside the box
Ideas don't dry up – thoughts do
Constant Daily Learner
Land of infinite possibilities

Includes the following Mind Maps:

5W1H
Idea Creation
Topical Ephemeral or Practical Immortal
Theory of the Brain
Idea
Planning Ahead and the Bigger Picture
Sparking Ideas
What is Original?
Thinking Styles
Thinking styles template
Creativity Toolkit Mind Map
Planetary Thinking
360° Thinking
Creative Focus
Odd Combinations
Thinking outside the Box
Thinking outside the Box Checklist
Curious Brain
Constant Daily Learner

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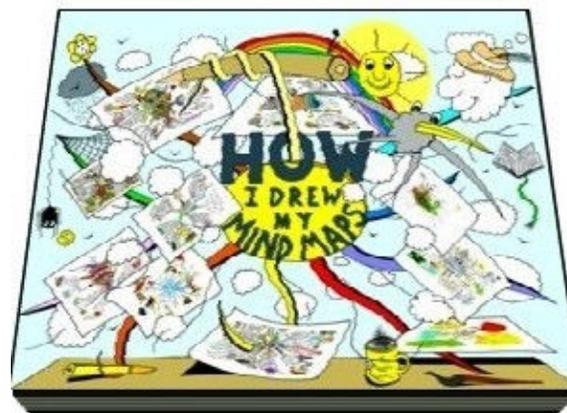


Beginners guide

Colour wheel and use of colours
Suggested Equipment
Drawing Fish
Drawing Cats
Drawing Books
Using Stencils & Templates
Drawing Hats
Mind Map Templates
Drawing Curves & Shapes
Detailed breakdown of "Fantasy Mind Map"
Enhancing Creativity through Thought Reduction
Drawing Speed Tests
Drawing Faces
Lettering
Photo to Cartoon transfer
Drawing Tips and Tricks
Doodleboards
Mind Maps

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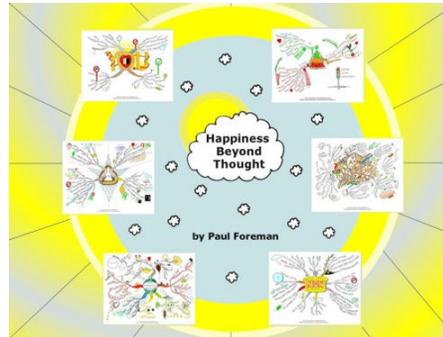
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Happiness is your primary state
Stop Thinking
Happiness is inside you
Go Within
Meditation
Organisation – Inner & Outer
Coming back to now (Present Moment Awareness)

Includes the following Mind Maps:

Happiness is your primary state
Stop Thinking Tips
Happiness is inside you
Go Within
Meditation
Organisation
Present Moment Awareness
Positive Acronym Your Name
Letting Go
Plus a Bonus Mind Map