

AN INTRODUCTION TO BREATHWORK

Breathwork Exercises To Find
Balance, Purpose And Peace



fitat60.com

Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. Breath of Fire	4
Benefits:	4
Qualities:.....	5
2. Bramhari Breathing	6
Benefits:	6
Qualities:.....	6
3. Vastrika Breathing.....	7
Benefits:	7
Qualities:.....	7
Directions:	8
4. Alternate Nostril Breathing.....	9
Benefits:	9
Qualities:.....	10
Directions:	10
5. Sitali Breathing.....	11
Benefits:	11
Qualities:.....	11
Directions:	11
Helpful Breathing Tips.....	12

Introduction



Breathing is something we generally take for granted. And yet we really shouldn't. Every system in the body relies on oxygen. From cognition to digestion, effective breathing can not only provide you with a greater sense of mental clarity, it can also help you sleep better, digest food more efficiently, improve your body's immune response, and reduce stress levels.

Here at Fitat60, we're all about finding ways to introduce new ideas and methods of doing things. So, here are five breathing methods that, whether you're a first timer or an old "Yogi", we know you will find of value. Take a moment to breath and incorporate these into your daily routine for better health.

1. Breath of Fire



The Breath of Fire, also known as Kapalabati, is a yogic Breathing practice that originally translates to “skull shining.” Yogic wisdom states that when this Breathing exercise is practiced regularly that the aura around the skull/ head will shine!

Benefits:

Breath of Fire is the best Breathing exercise for strengthening core muscles and lower back muscles. It provides circulation to the digestive system and stimulates digestive processing. When you have a lower back pain stretching can make it worse and often injure you more, but this Breathing exercise is a safe and simple way to stimulate the bio electric current around those back muscles and spine to strengthen the necessary areas and help alleviate the pain.

Qualities:

Breath of Fire is a heating and energizing Breathing exercise which is best done in the morning. It's a great way to oxygenate the body and brain and helps sharpen the mind as you transition out of sleep mode.

Directions:

1. Start by sitting in a comfortable position with your spine upright
2. Optional - place one or both hands on your stomach to help guide the breath
3. Keeping the mouth closed, lips relaxed: first Inhale through your nose while expanding your belly into your hands, then exhale through your nose while drawing your belly button towards your spine. Repeat.

It is always advised to start slow and low in reps with breathing exercises. A good place to start is with 20 slow breaths, 20 medium speed breaths, and 20 fast speed breaths. Make sure to do 1-2 minutes of slow inhaling and exhaling afterward to help bring your system into balance.

2. Bramhari Breathing

This Breathing exercise produces a vibratory buzzing sensation to stimulate the chest, throat and head.

Benefits:

Traditionally this Breathing exercise when practiced in the lowest register of your voice produces a vibration for the throat and thyroid gland. This stimulates these areas bringing them into balance, whether they are under or overactive. This can also be a preventative practice to maintain a healthy thyroid. This vibration in the low register of the voice also creates reverberation and stimulation of the upper lungs, thymus and chest. This is a great Breathing exercise when there is any chest congestion as it can help to break it up. If you change the notes and tones to higher registers of your voice then the vibration can stimulate the sinuses, pituitary gland, and pineal gland. This exercise is great for stimulating these hormonal glandular centres and helps maintain their balance.

Qualities:

Bramhari Breathing has an adaptogenic quality as the vibration can be stimulating but also calming depending on what your body needs to bring it into balance. This exercise is best in the morning but in between the more heating and energizing breath exercises like Breath of Fire or Vastrika Breathing. It gives a good contrast and helps to regulate the system when paired with faster Breathing practices.

Directions:

1. Sit comfortably with your spine straight.
2. Inhale in through your nose
3. With relaxed mouth and lips exhale slowly by humming *the tone of the hum can change in range to target different areas of chest throat and head.

Again, it is always good to start with a low number of reps. Even just ten of these breaths or 1 minute of this Breathing exercise can be a great place to start.

3. Vastrika Breathing



This Breathing exercise targets and oxygenates the upper chambers of the chest and lungs.

Benefits:

It brings circulation to this chest area as well as to the upper back and neck. This breath exercise is helpful in breaking up congestion and stimulating the circulatory and respiratory system. Often this exercise can be used to train the lungs which can help people who struggle with irregular breathing.

Qualities:

Vastrika Breathing is a very energizing and heating practice. Great at any time of the day when there's a dip in energy levels as it's enlivening. It oxygenates the body and brings a surge of energy to relieve the tiredness.

Directions:

1. Find a comfortable seat with your spine straight
2. Inhale through your nose, lifting your arms above your head with your hands and fingers spread wide open towards the sky
3. Exhale through your nose while you bend your arms, drawing your elbows towards your rib cage and bringing your hands into fists next to your chest
4. Repeat

Try starting with 3 sets of 20 breath. Similarly, to the Breath of Fire, you can do the first set slowly, the second set a little faster and the last set at the fastest speed. Increase as you see fit.

4. Alternate Nostril Breathing



Alternate Nostril Breathing is sometimes referred to as “Nadhi Shodana” in the Yogic sciences. This Breathing exercise is a breath control practice that balances body and mind.

Benefits:

Alternate Nostril Breathing is known to balance the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The right brain is associated with receptivity, creativity, emotions, magic and the unknown. The left brain is associated with organization, logical processing, and methodology. Alternate Nostril Breathing brings both of these sides of the brain into perfect balance with each other within ourselves. This Breathing practice is also helpful for relieving anxiety and stress.

Qualities:

This Breathing exercise has a calming, balancing and cooling affect. This is a great practice to do before meditation or after energizing breath work. This is a good one to use when feeling a bit stressed when having trouble sleeping or want to rest. It helps to obtain a relaxed and balanced headspace.

Directions:

1. Find a comfortable seat with your spine upright
2. Bring your right hand to your face
3. Place your right thumb over the right nostril to block the air passage
4. Inhale through the left nostril
5. Take your right pointer finger to close off the left nostril
6. Hold your breath momentarily while your pointer finger and thumb are blocking the air passage ways
7. Release your right thumb while slowly exhaling the breath through your right nostril.
8. Inhale through the right nostril while your pointer finger is still blocking the left nostril.
9. After inhalation on the right side, bring the right thumb back to block the air passage of the right nostril
10. Hold the breath while the thumb and pointer finger are block both nostrils
11. Release the pointer finger while slowly exhaling through the left nostril
12. Proceed to begin the cycle again by inhaling through the left nostril again.

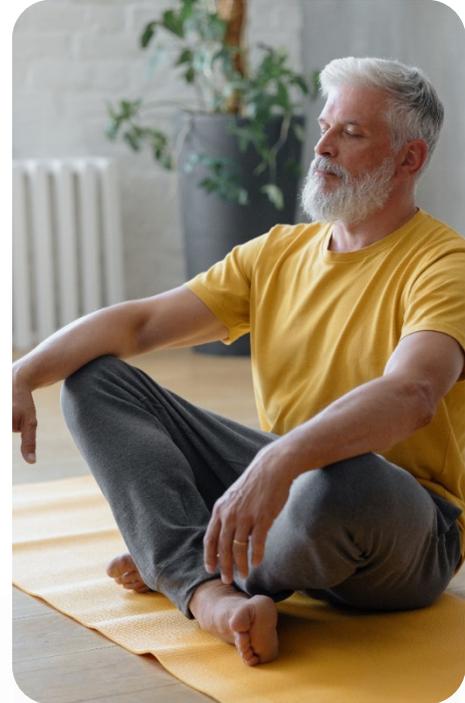
Try practicing this breath for 2-5 minutes and go at your own pace. Feel free to increase or do less depending on how you feel.

5. Sitali Breathing

This Breathing exercise is a really incredible practice that helps to cool down the entire body and mind.

Benefits:

Sitali Breathing is a great anti-inflammatory Breathing exercise. This practice helps to reduce heat and inflammation in the digestive system. Our digestive system is a fire that breaks down and digests our food. Depending on our habits and how we metabolize things our bodies can become overheated and require something to restore balance. Sitali Breathing can help to counter the digestive heat and also the mental heat. When we get angry or frustrated the mind gets heated. This Breathing exercise can be used to process and cool down these emotions and thoughts.



Qualities:

Sitali Breathing has a cooling and calming effect on the body and mind. This practice is great to do when you feel hunger pangs, or “hangry.” This exercise is great when you feel overheated from being out in the sun or in summertime. It is of benefit when you’re feeling frustrated as it totally cools down emotions and allows you to find balance in those stressful moments.

Directions:

1. Begin by finding a comfortable seat with your spine straight
2. Curl the sides of your tongue if possible
3. Inhale through your tongue “tunnel” and draw the cool air down your throat
4. Hold the breath by pressing your tongue to the roof of your mouth
5. Sticking your tongue out of your mouth, exhale the breath by saying the sound “HA” to release the heat

Helpful Breathing Tips



- **Be aware.** If you feel any discomfort or light-headedness, stop immediately and return to normal breathing. Consult an instructor for guidance and supervision.
- **Never force or restrict your breath.** Don't compromise the quality of the breath. Do the best that you can. The more you practice, the longer you'll be able to perform the exercises, and eventually, you'll be able to use more of your lung capacity.
- **Patience and practice.** All breathing exercises should be done with great care and awareness. Try to stay focused on the journey, not the destination! Over time, you will start to notice the benefits of the practice.
- **Precautions.** If you suffer from diabetes, high or low blood pressure, heart conditions, epilepsy, or vertigo, please consult your health care provider before performing any of these breathing exercises.

Good luck and enjoy the many benefits!

Breathe.