Five Tips To Help You Breathe Easy

Here are five things you can practice for better breath control and easier breathing … a special report by Sarvesh Shashi. (Inputs are from Sarvesh Shashi, Founder, SARVA, yoga-based wellness platform.)

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Yoga is often mistaken as an 'exercise' that only caters to the body. But the most important thing we forget, is that the central dogma of yoga is breath. Life is breath.

"We breathe in oxygen and release carbon dioxide, it's simple biology," is what some said. But breathing is a very powerful way to control the mind.

Here's an example, if you breathe slowly and deliberately, you begin to feel sleepy. Your heart rate normalizes and you feel calmer. But when you are stressed, your breath quickens, it increases blood pressure. It increases heart rate and so on. If we flip the situation here and breathe easy while stressed, we're training our body to react calmly to situations of stress! I'd say breathing is not just inhaling and exhaling, it's actually a complex combination of intricate internal processes that lead to life!

Here are five things you can practice for better breath control and easier breathing.

The first pose is Bhujangasana or the Cobra pose. Designed to open the chest muscles, the Bhujangasana is a beginner-friendly pose that not only provides relief in asthamatic conditions but also allows one to calm the mind and promotes an overall feeling of happiness.

The second pose is the Ardha Matsyendrasana or the half fish pose. Designed to be a great twist for the upper body, this induces deeper breathing than usual and enhances the muscles of the Lungs to perform better. It also aids in better circulation to the body and provides relief in times of stress.

The third pose is the toughest. No its not an elaborate twisting and balancing exercise, its Shavasana. We carry tension around our bodies for several days/weeks and some of us even years! This can really affect our breathing patterns. Shavasana helps regulate these in a resting pose. Clearing your mind of the chaos and the body of all the tension is a challenging task for us, who live every single conscious moment thinking or doing something!

The last two are breathing techniques that one must practice to breathe better. Not just this, there are a host of other benefits that are attached to these.

The concept of pranayama is often mistaken for deep breathing.The difference is, In pranayama the movements are so slow that there is adequate time for every part of the lung to absorb in oxygen. Breath retention is a powerful way to energise the body.

Anulom vilom is a specific type of controlled breathing (pranayama). It involves holding one nostril closed while inhaling, then holding the other nostril closed while exhaling. The process is then reversed and repeated. Alternate nostril breathing is said to have many physical and psychological benefits, including stress reduction and improved breathing and circulation.

And lastly, Bhramari Pranayama. Bhramari word is made from the Hindi word "Bhramar" which means Bumble Bee. Brahmari (Bee Breath) is a very effective pranayama for calming the mind. The activity of this respiratory exercise helps to induce a calming impact on the mind rapidly. Brahmari Pranayama edges in reducing high vital signs, fatigue, and mental stress. This Pranayama is one of the great breathing exercises to release the mind of disquiet, anxiety, or frustration and get rid of anger.

There is research that corroborates the fact that Yoga is very beneficial for breathing. While the universe of Yoga is endless. It speaks of asanas, pranayamas, mudras, meditation techniques that have several benefits from their practice, the above are suitable for beginners to start their journey to yoga. We must remember that breath is life and life is breath.

SARVA's latest campaign #StarttohKaro is a call to action for people to start on their physical and mental health journeys with any style of activity that suits and excites them.

Consistent daily exercise, breathing techniques to boost immunity and good nutrition can do the trick, just like it did for me during the time I suffered from Covid. June is celebrated as International Day of Yoga Month, as it lauds a practice that ensures holistic well-being. We want people to start their tryst with good health and utilize our platform towards helping communities thrive and work towards feeling healthy, physically and mentally.