

Pranayama

Abdominal Breathing: Supine

Starting Position: supine, with bent legs. Your lumbar region is completely in contact with the ground (a fundamental element to this exercise). In order to achieve a deeper relaxation, your legs can be tied together with a belt. It is important to align the head with the torso, and to keep your face parallel to the ceiling. The reference points are the pubis, sternum, chin and the center of the forehead. In case of excessive lordosis of the cervical area or the lower back, place a thin pillow under your head or rest your legs on a chair at a 90 degree angle.

Place your hands on your abdomen to act as witnesses of the movement. Your jaw, eyes, tongue and throat are deeply relaxed.

When inhaling, the breath will move downwards with the diaphragm and the abdomen will expand.

When exhaling, the diaphragm is relaxed and moves up to the original position. It is particularly important to let the abdomen deflate; otherwise the energy stagnates and the spine tenses.

The abdominal expansion should be felt externally moving upwards, at the back and on the inside. The different phases of the exercise should initially be executed separately to develop sensitivity, and then practiced contemporaneously.

During abdominal breathing your rib cage remains motionless.

Phase 1: perception of the anterior movement. Place your hands on the abdomen, with thumbs and index fingers in contact. Inhaling direct the breath towards the hands. With empty lungs the abdomen is drawn inwards and the fingers joined; after inhaling the abdomen is expanded and the fingers separated.



Phase 2: perception of the lateral movement. The hands are now placed laterally, just between the iliac crests and the floating ribs. Inhaling, direct the breath towards the hands, exhaling observe the belly moving from the sides towards the center.



Phase 3: perception of the posterior movement. The hands are placed behind the back, at the level of the lumbar vertebrae and with the palms towards the ground. Inhaling direct the breath towards the hands, feeling the increase of pressure on the fingers, pressure that will be reduced with expiration.



5 to 10 breaths for each phase.

At the end, remain in stillness for a few minutes visualizing the breath that, as you inhale, expands the belly from the center in every direction, and, as you exhale, withdraws towards a bright central point.

Contraindications: none.

Benefits: brings deep psycho-physical relaxation; increases mobility of the diaphragm; massages viscera and abdominal organs; deep relaxation of the lumbar-sacral region. It benefits blood circulation and the heart, and assures high and fast energetic recovery.