

Connection & Centering Exercise

Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your heart.

Breathe in from your belly to your heart for 5 breaths.

Move your hand from your belly to the back of your head. Continue breathing from your belly to your heart for 5 breaths.

Move your hand from your heart to your forehead. Continue breathing from your belly to your heart for 5 breaths.

Return your hands to your belly and your heart for 5 breaths.

Calming Breath Exercises

3-Part Breath

Inhale through the nose with 3 little sniffs of air (partial inhalations). The 1st breath fills up the belly, the next expands into the ribs, and the next expands up to the heart and shoulders making one complete inhalation.

At the end of the inhalation, pause for a beat or two without stressing your nervous system.

Exhale through the mouth with a loud sigh.

Repeat 5 times. Release the pattern, return to natural breathing. Notice how you are feeling.

Square Breathing

There are four parts to this breath cycle: the inhale, the pause at the top of the inhale, the exhale, and the pause at the bottom of the exhale.

In this practice, we are sustaining the duration of the natural pauses to make them of equal length with the inhalation and the exhalation-hence the term “square breathing.”

Inhale and count two, three, four...Pause-two, three, four...Exhale-two, three, four...Pause-two, three, four.

Repeat 5 times. Release the pattern, return to natural breathing. Notice how you are feeling.

Ratio Breathing

Ratio breathing refers to inhaling for a specific number of seconds, then pausing (suspending the breath) for a specific number of seconds, and then exhaling for a specific number of seconds. Our practice is 4:6:8. If this overstimulates your nervous system, you could reduce to 3:2:4.

The general rule is to make the exhale (the last number) longer than your inhale (the first number). A longer exhale, even one only slightly longer, stimulates the ventral parasympathetic nervous system, calming the mind and the body.

Inhale through the nose- two, three, four. Pause,-two, three, four, five, six. Exhale through the nose- two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

Balancing Breath Exercise

Alternate Nostril Breath

Placing the peace fingers of the right hand on the forehead, rest your ring finger next to your left nostril and your thumb next to your right nostril.

Using your ring finger, gently close the outside of the left nostril and inhale through the right nostril, two, three, four. Pause and exhale through the right nostril, two, three, four.

Release the left nostril and close the right nostril with your thumb. Inhale, two, three, four. Pause and exhale, two, three, four.

Release the right nostril and close the left nostril continuing the same pattern. Repeat for a few rounds.

Release the pattern, return to natural breathing. Notice how you are feeling.

Straw Breathing

Notice your breathing. Practice a few slow rounds of breathing in and out through the nose. Notice how your body feels in this moment.

Next, inhale through the nose for a count of four. Now make a small “O” with your lips, as if you were holding a straw in your mouth. Exhale for a count of six. (You can also practice this exercise with an actual straw if you have one handy.)

Repeat 5 times. Release the pattern, return to natural breathing. Notice how you are feeling.

Energizing Breath Exercises

Breath of Joy

Begin standing upright in mountain pose. The inhalation is a quick 3 part breath, aligned with movement. Inhale 1, raise arms to shoulder height in front of you. Inhale 2, open arms up to your sides. Inhale 3, raise arms toward the sky.

Exhale with a loud “ha” while bending the knees, and tilting the head and hips forward while swinging your arms down.

Repeat 5 times. Release the pattern, return to natural breathing. Notice how you are feeling.