

**A-** as in German „Atem“ (meaning breath), Attention, Awareness, Arrival, Alignment...

“The depth of your breath influences your quality of life”.

This sentence sums it up – how we breath can be very significant for our daily feeling. You can breath hectic and short or long and deep – both can change your perception of how you feel.

With a long deep breath you can relax

- it calms down your parasympatic nervsystem
- creates a higher awareness for your brain
- cleans your blood
- energizes you and increases your vitality
- helps to fight addictions
- causes clarity, patience and a cool head to be able to deal with negative emotions
- activates and cleans your nerve tracts

I could continue this list much further, but I think it is pretty obvious that the long deep breath can increase your health and well-being.

It also can effect you on an emotional level, you can connect to yourself by consciously breathing long and deep – and doing that enables you to not react in hectic situations, but to consider and act conscious without allowing your emotions to take over.

“Atma” means soul in Sanskrit, to me my breath is also a direct way to get in touch with my soul.

You can relax when you exhale and take in lifes energy (prana) when you inhale. You can relax and expand – nobody can take that away from you. You can feel all the space and freedom within you – even when you think that a situation boxes you in.

2–3 deep long breaths will make you feel an uplifting difference – always and everywhere.

You decide if you want to do it – your conscious decision is the first step, second step is knowing how the long deep breath works. You can make this decision always and everywhere – you always have the choice!

The technique:

You use the full capacity of your lungs by charging them using all of these three areas:

- Abdominal breathing
- Chest breathing
- Collarbone breathing

I did not know that the belly was also supposed to move with every breath of air before I found out about the long and deep breath. Have you also heard this: “stand straight – uplift your chest and pull the belly in”? I do not know if this is only a typical German “advice” or an International one – let`s hope it has not spread too far, because – obviously this has nothing to do with your natural rhythm according to which your breath-organs want to move.

So, how about giving it a try?

Of course it would be nice if you can find a nice quiet place and put on some relaxing music, but as we are breathing all the time and everywhere you can start this exercise also almost everywhere, sitting at your desk, cutting vegetables, ... It is helpful if both of your hands are free.

You should first feel each of the three areas separately and then connect them to long and deep breaths. It is best to practice each step several times – do at least 3 breaths per area.

You do it like this:

1. Abdominal breathing: Relax your belly and allow it to extend while you are slowly and deeply inhaling.

Pull your belly button slightly in and up when you exhale; let your chest relax and draw your attention very consciously to the movements of your abdominal wall and your belly button. You can strengthen your focus by putting one hand on your belly and putting the other hand on your thorax.

Feel your hand on the belly moving and make sure the hand on your chest does not move – feel all your muscles which are activated.

2. Chest breathing: Sit up straight and inhale slowly using your chest muscles – without extending your belly, just use the part above your belly. Feel your thorax expanding as the intercostals muscles (yes – there are muscles for that between your ribs!) are moving, sense the slow expansion.

Exhale completely – again without using the belly.

You might want to strengthen your focus by putting your hands on your upper and lower ribs – you can feel the lower ribs moving more than the upper ribs.

The lower ribs are more flexible, they are not fixed to your sternum so they can expand sideways. Use their flexibility for your breath!

3. Collarbone breathing: Sit up straight, pull the belly button in, tense the belly and lift up your chest – without inhaling.

In this posture you then inhale slowly and deeply and slightly lift up your shoulders and your collarbone – then exhale with your lifted chest.

This are the **three stages**, you **connect them to one long and deep breath** with one long and smooth flow – it goes like this:

Sit up straight, when your spine is straight you allow your muscles and ribs more movement and you tune into a more attentive attitude.

**Inhale**: start with the abdominal breathing, then add the chest breathing and finish with the collarbone breathing – first the lower, then the middle and finally the upper area.

**Exhale**: the other way around. You begin at the upper area, then the middle area and finally the lower area. First you let your shoulders and the collarbone down, then you empty the chest and then you gently pull your belly in to let go of all the “used” air – the deeper you exhale the more fresh air you can take in.

Please **pay attention to the ascending and the reverse order**; when you inhale you fill yourself bottom-up and when you exhale you empty yourself top down.

You might then want to connect each breath with an affirmation or a mantra, e.g. “Sat Nam” (Sat=truth, Nam =Identity). Think “Sat” when you inhale and “Nam” when you exhale. This will calm down your thoughts. Of course you can take any other words which give you a good feeling and support you. For example you take “I” when you inhale and “let go” when you exhale or “all” “will be good” – listen to yourself which words are the right ones for you.

I hope that these short explanations will help you to practice the long deep breath and to experience its pleasant effect.

I am fascinated by the difference it makes when I breath unconscious and flat or long and deep. It is my wish that more people take more often long and deep breaths – to slow down their life for a short moment and reduce their stress. This vision lead to the writing “How deep is your breath?”. The version “How deep is our breath?” is related to the fact that we all are connected through our breath – we all are breathing the same air on this beautiful planet...

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This is the beginning of ViMAs download – series, so it is almost ViMAs first breath ☺

I am looking forward to your feedback!!

There are so many breathing exercises available – Kundalini Yoga is like a chamber of treasure full of beautiful short exercises to strengthen and deepen

your breath, which are also very practical far away from your Yoga mat, in everyday life. Please let me know if you would like to know more about it.