



# Breathing

It's so easy, you do it in your sleep. You are breathing as you read this, unless you are stopping your breath.

Anxious feelings build when breathing is difficult or constrained. Since breath is required for living, the sensations of uneasy breathing are related to primal fears of dying, even though life may not be actually threatened in the moment.

Fundamental to healthy, lively breathing is the ability of your ribs to move without restrictions. When the ribs are able to move easily, the lungs can inflate and deflate appropriately.

The diaphragm muscle, a floor to the rib cage, is able to do its work when the ribs are properly supported by the spine.

To promote efficient breathing, prevent yourself from squeezing down, or up, on your ribs. Lengthen up gently through your spine, all the way to the top where your head balances on the top vertebra. Let your lower back and legs be free to allow the lower ribs to move fully.

## **Try This:**

Lie down on the floor with your head supported by books and your knees bent. Allow yourself to rest on the ground. Sense your contact points with the ground. Breathe in through your nose, quietly and gently, allowing your ribs to expand without force.

Let the air out through your mouth steadily, allowing your ribs to return to their resting state, and then breathe in again through your nose.

Breathe out steadily through your lips as if blowing out a candle. Close your lips and breathe in quietly through your nose, observing the expansion of your ribs without forcing the movement at all.

Do this breath cycle for 2 or 3 minutes and continue observing the elastic expansion and return of your ribs. Let every exhale continue to its natural end in order to breathe in again.

Stand up and do this breathing pattern from standing. Stand in a good balance, with your legs supple and your upper body at full stature.

Inhale through your nose quietly, exhale through your mouth steadily to the natural end of every breath, without collapsing in your upper body. You may sense your abdominal muscles drawing inwards as you exhale. Inhaling efficiently requires releasing the abdominal muscles without collapsing your spine and ribs.

Sit in a good balance on a firm chair and follow all the same instructions. Keep your eyes open and your head balanced easily up on your spine whether lying down, standing or sitting.

***You are designed to breathe. You have been doing it all your life. Keep it simple, supple, smooth and supported***