



# Wednesday Wellness Tip

Provided by the Employee Wellness Program at Northern Michigan University

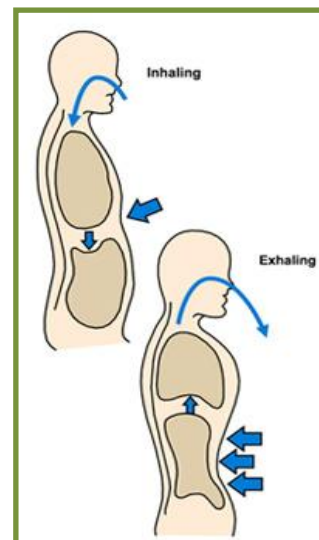
## Importance of the Breath

**Relaxation:** Relieving the body and mind from effort/work

**Deep Breathing:** Utilizing the diaphragm to create strong breaths which activates the parasympathetic nervous system (AKA the relaxation system of the body)

### Benefits:

- Relieves physical muscle tension
  - Allows the mental function to slow and relax
  - Body and mind connection
  - Calms and centers
  - Activates parasympathetic nervous system
  - Releases natural wastes, such as carbon dioxide
  - Gives the internal organs a gentle massage
  - Increases the oxygen to all cells
  - Strengthens the lungs
  - Slows your heart rate
  - Lowers your blood pressure
  - Increases blood flow to muscles
  - Improves concentration
  - Reduces anger and frustration
  - Boosts confidence
- (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2011.)



### How Diaphragmatic Breathing Works:

**Inhale:** Diaphragm drops, the rib cage moves out, and air rushes into the vacuum created.

**Exhale:** Diaphragm pushes up, the rib cage moves in, and air pushes out.

# Simple Breathing Practices

**3 Part Diaphragmatic Breath (SYTTM, 2008.):** This technique consists of 1 inhale and 1 exhale, but each of the inspirations and expirations have 3 parts to it. Move through the process slowly to get familiar with it, then start with about 10-15 breaths. Work your way up to 20 -25.

## INHALE:

1. Breathe in through your nose and fill up your belly like a balloon
2. Fill the rib cage; feel each and every space in-between the ribs become wider
3. Finish by filling up the upper chest

## EXHALE:

1. Release through your nose from your chest
2. Feel the rib cage become tighter and the spaces in-between the ribs become smaller
3. Use your abdominal muscles to push out the stagnant air at the bottom of your belly

**Pure Breath Technique (SYTTM, 2008.):** This breathing technique is done in the following order to produce a calm breath and mind.

1. Smooth – Start to slow down the breath, allow it to become soft without any jerk or pauses
2. Even – same number of counts in and same number of counts out
3. Interconnect – Create an easy transition between the inhales and exhales; just as if the breath were a Ferris Wheel, as you inhale the breath rides up and as you shift you naturally fall into the exhale and ride the Ferris Wheel down



## References:

Mayo Clinic Staff. Stress Management; Relaxation Techniques. August 2011.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/relaxation-technique/SR00007>

Sangha Yoga Teacher Training Manual. (SYTTM) Karina A Mirsky, Beria Rosen, & Katy Knolls at Sangha Yoga, 2008.