

The Essential Breath

from *The Healer Within* by Dr. Roger Jahnke

This breath practice is the basis of most health-enhancement breathing methods. It is the natural breathing pattern of the newborn baby. It is known simply as the abdominal breath. Many people have learned it as the “Yoga Breath.” It is typical for people to become accustomed to breathing in a shallow way. While our typical breathing allows for survival, it does not increase vitality or accelerate healing.

First, adjust your posture so that your lungs, as well as your chest and abdomen, can expand freely. This is best accomplished by standing or sitting erect. You may also do this practice lying down. Breathe in through the nose, filling the lower portion of the lungs first. This will cause your abdomen to expand as the diaphragm drops down and compresses the internal organs. Then allow the upper lobes of the lungs to fill. This expands the ribs and chest cavity. You will feel a tremendous sense of satisfaction when your lungs are completely full.

Then exhale slowly through the nose. Repeat. When the Essential Breath is done optimally, you will reach the point of fullness, naturally rest for an instant, and then spill over a threshold into a long, slow exhalation. When you take a slow, full breath and reach this threshold, it is very exhilarating. You may also feel a rushing of warmth or a flowing feeling that naturally occurs throughout the body as you release the breath and drift into relaxation. This is the sensation of your own body producing and circulating powerful self-healing resources and profound internal medicines.

