

# Breathing Exercises

## The breath of life

*Shallow breathing actually breeds inefficiency of the mind. To bring out the magic in your mind a full oxygen intake must be a daily conscious habit. (Koran A 1965 !)*

### **Abdominal breathing:**

Settle yourself comfortably, in a sitting position, back straight, legs and arms uncrossed.

Close your eyes, or rest your gaze gently on a fixed point.

First, focus on an out-breath. Follow this exhalation down into your lower abdomen, just below your navel, feeling this sink inwards a little. You may like to rest one or two hands there to feel this more directly.

Now, breathing in, feel the lower abdomen expand, pushing your hand(s) outwards a little.

This may take a few breaths to get used to. Once you've established a rhythm, simply follow this with your awareness down in the centre of your body, for a few more breaths, deep and even, regular and steady.

You can then go on from this calm state to practice one of the other applied relaxation techniques.

## LET THE BREATH TAKE YOU INTO THE BODY

*At times, when my mind has been very active, it has acquired such momentum that I find it impossible to take my attention away from it and feel the inner body. This happens particularly when I get into a worry or anxiety pattern. Do you have any suggestions?*

If at any time you are finding it hard to get in touch with the inner body, it is usually easier to focus on your breathing first. Conscious breathing, which is a powerful meditation in its own right, will gradually put you in touch with the body. Follow the breath with your attention as it moves in and out of your body. Breathe into the body, and feel your abdomen expanding and contracting slightly with each inhalation and exhalation. If you find it easy to visualize, close your eyes and see yourself surrounded by light or immersed in a luminous substance — a sea of consciousness. Then breathe in that light. Feel that luminous substance filling up your body and making it luminous also. Then gradually focus more on the feeling. You are now in your body. Don't get attached to any visual image.

Tolle (2003)