



Yoga Nidra

“Noticing Flows of Inhalation and Exhalation”

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RICHARD MILLER: Noticing flows of inhalation and exhalation. Your breath is one of the most powerful healing resources that you have readily available to you. Sensing your breath nourishes your ability to concentrate. It supports your central nervous system in maintaining a healthy balance between your fight/flight/freeze and rest/renew/heal responses.

Breath sensing helps you release tension and feel at ease in your body and your mind. It also improves your ability to sense and respond to the messengers that are constantly delivering information to you, from both your body and your mind. Your improved ability to sense and respond to this information supports you to be responsive, compassionate, and caring toward yourself and others. One important guideline to keep in mind as you practice breath sensing is to fully enter into the experience of your breath.

Rather than thinking about your breath, note, feel, follow, and deeply experience it. Feel yourself completely engaged by the sensation of each breath. You'll be amazed by how just a few minutes of breath sensing can leave you feeling grounded and refreshed and able to respond to the moment, no matter your circumstances.

In the following practice, you note and follow the natural flows of inhalation and exhalation within your body. You don't interfere with your breathing pattern in any way. As you simply note and follow your breath, notice the natural sense of well-being that's present. In a place where you won't be disturbed, take 5 to 10 minutes to experience the following practice.

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Adjust your body so that you feel completely supported by the surface on which you're resting. Scan your body and release any unnecessary tension that's present.

With your eyes gently open or closed, allow your senses to open. Welcome sounds around you, the touch of air on your skin, the sensations of your body where it touches the surface it's resting on.

Notice the feeling of letting go into being at ease throughout your entire body and mind. And bring attention to sensations in your jaw, mouth, eyes, forehead, neck and shoulders, arms, palms of your hands, chest, belly, upper back, lower back, pelvis and hips, legs and feet.

Welcome your entire body as a field of radiant sensation, front and backside, left and right sides, sensation inside and on the surface of your body.

Sense and welcome your entire body as a radiant field of sensation and bring attention to the sensation of your body breathing, just noting, just feeling, without going into thinking.

Notice your body breathing. The sensation and feeling of each inhalation and exhalation, as breath comes in and breath goes out. As your body inhales, notice the sensations of your belly, midsection, and chest, expanding with the incoming air.

As your body exhales, notice your chest, midsection and belly releasing, all the while with each inhalation and exhalation, feel yourself settling, relaxing, and letting go, with each exhalation, with each inhalation.

If your mind wanders, gently and non-judgmentally bring it back to just noting the gentle expansion and release of your entire body with each inhalation and exhalation, keeping attention in your breathing moment to moment.

Noticing the different sensations as your body breathes in and out, sensations of expansion, sensations of releasing with each and every breath. With each breath, welcome and nourish the

feeling of your inner resource of well-being as you continue noting your body breathing itself, every cell in your body welcoming the feeling of well-being with each and every breath.

Exhaling-- abdomen releasing, body relaxing. Continue noting, welcoming, and experiencing your body breathing itself, the sensation of your body inhaling and expanding, exhaling and releasing. Your entire body and mind, relaxing into ease with each breath, peaceful, grounded.

The entire body has a radiant field of sensation, sensing your inner resource of well-being, ease and peace, remaining here as long as you feel comfortable, noting and being at ease with each and every breath, inhaling the sensation of the body, receiving the breath, expanding, exhaling, releasing, and letting go ever more deeply with each breath.

When it feels right, allow your eyes to slowly open and close several times, while continuing to register the incoming and outgoing breath sensations of feeling at ease. Sensing the surface that's supporting your body, the feeling of the environment around you, sound, objects, the sensation of your entire body, sensations of well-being, and just noting any emotions or thoughts that are also present.

And as you're ready and it feels right, with your eyes open, feel yourself present to this moment, aware of your body breathing, your inner resource, and sensations of well-being, peace, and ease.

As you come back fully now to your wide-awake state of mind and body, present to this moment. And when you feel ready, continue noting your breath as you begin to move out into your daily life, every once in a while returning to noting your breath in the midst of your circumstances, your inner resource, and the deep feeling of well-being that accompanies each and every breath you take.

If it feels right, take a few minutes and reflect on what you've just experienced. How does your body feel now, as opposed to how it felt at the start of this practice? How does your mind feel? As you engage this practice of breathing or, even in this moment, as you simply open to the sensations of your body breathing itself, what happens to your thinking mind?

Do you feel calmer, more relaxed, and more at ease than you did when you began this practice? Did you experience particular thoughts, feelings, or emotions as you practiced noticing your breath? Can you imagine how you might use this practice on the fly in the midst of your daily life? If so, make it your intention to practice breath sensing when it occurs to you, or when you feel the need to relax rest and restore yourself.



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