

The Science of Conscious Breathing

The Impact of Conscious Breathing on Mind and Body

Conscious breathing, a mindful practice that involves deliberate and intentional control of the breath, has been found to have a profound impact on the mind and body. As we explore the science behind conscious breathing, we discover its ability to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and reducing stress.

Top 5 Facts about Conscious Breathing

1. Conscious breathing is a simple and accessible practice that anyone can learn and incorporate into their daily lives, making it a universally beneficial skillset.
2. Through conscious breathing, we can harness the power of the parasympathetic nervous system to induce a state of calm and relaxation, counteracting the effects of the body's stress response.
3. Nasal breathing, where the breath is drawn in and out through the nose, has been shown to have additional benefits for respiratory health, emotional regulation, and cognitive function.
4. By practicing conscious breathing regularly, educators and individuals can develop greater emotional resilience, improved focus, and enhanced overall well-being.
5. Science and medicine have demonstrated that impaired breathing can lead to physical, emotional, and cognitive issues, highlighting the importance of cultivating proper breathing techniques.

Explanation of Conscious Breathing, Nasally In and Out:

Conscious breathing involves directing our attention to the breath and intentionally controlling its rhythm. The act of breathing nasally, in and out through the nose, is a fundamental component of conscious breathing. Nasal breathing has several benefits, including:

- Filtering and warming the air before it reaches the lungs, promoting healthier respiratory function.
- Stimulating the release of nitric oxide, which supports cardiovascular health and improves blood flow.

- Activating the parasympathetic nervous system, triggering the body's relaxation response.

Risks of Incorrect Breathing:

Science and medicine have demonstrated that physical, emotional, and cognitive issues arise from impaired breathing. Educators play a critical role in promoting healthy breathing habits, especially in children, as incorrect breathing can lead to various complications.

Signs of Impaired Breathing in Children and Adults:

- Mouth breathing, especially during sleep
- Frequent sighing or yawning
- Shallow or rapid breathing
- Chronic snoring or sleep apnoea
- Irregular breathing patterns during rest or physical activity
- Frequent allergies or respiratory infections
- Deformities of the mouth, jaw and teeth caused by incorrect breathing and positioning of the tongue

By recognizing the signs of impaired breathing and promoting conscious breathing practices, parents and educators can contribute to the overall well-being of children and adults, fostering a healthy and balanced environment.

Step-by-Step Guide to Conscious Breathing:

1. Find a comfortable and quiet space to sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes or soften your gaze to reduce distractions.
3. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen.
4. Take a deep breath in through your nose, feeling your abdomen rise as you inhale.
5. Exhale slowly and completely through your nose, feeling your abdomen fall.
6. Continue breathing in this manner, focusing your attention solely on your breath.
7. If your mind starts to wander, gently bring your focus back to your breath.
8. Practice conscious breathing for a few minutes or as long as you feel comfortable.

Tools:

1. Quiet space for practice
2. Comfortable seating or lying surface
3. Mindful Breathing Timer (optional)

Activities:

1. Mindful Breathing Practice (Nasal Breathing)
2. Conscious Breathing Visualization Exercise

Activity: Conscious Breathing Visualization Exercise

The Conscious Breathing Visualization Exercise is designed to help participants experience a deep sense of calm and relaxation through mindful breathing. This exercise allows individuals to visualize their breath as a gentle, soothing wave, bringing a sense of peace and clarity to their minds.

Instructions:

1. Find a Comfortable Space: Sit or lie down in a quiet and comfortable space where you won't be disturbed.
2. Relax Your Body: Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax your body and mind.
3. Nasal Breathing: Inhale and exhale through your nose, focusing on the sensation of the breath entering and leaving your nostrils.
4. Visualize the Breath: As you continue breathing through your nose, visualize your breath as a soft, calming wave. Imagine this wave flowing gently in and out with each breath.
5. Imagine the Ocean: Picture yourself by the seashore, feeling the rhythm of the waves. As you inhale, see the wave gently approaching the shore, and as you exhale, watch it recede back into the ocean.
6. Sync Your Breath: Match the rhythm of your breath with the ebb and flow of the waves in your visualization. Let the image of the soothing wave synchronize with your breath.
7. Embrace Calmness: Feel the calming energy of the oceanic wave washing away any tension or stress within you. Embrace the serenity and peace it brings to your entire being.
8. Stay Present: Stay present in the visualization, fully immersed in the experience of your breath and the tranquil waves.

9. Continue for a Few Minutes: Take a few minutes to enjoy this visualization, allowing yourself to feel more centred and at ease with each breath.

10. Slowly Return: When you're ready, gently open your eyes and bring your awareness back to the present moment.

Benefits:

- Promotes relaxation and reduces stress.
- Enhances mindfulness and present-moment awareness.
- Cultivates a deep sense of inner peace and tranquility.

Feel free to use this Conscious Breathing Visualization Exercise. We encourage you to practice this exercise regularly to experience the profound benefits of conscious breathing and visualization.

Downloadable Content:

1. Conscious Breathing Visualization Tool
2. Mindful Breathing Practice Guide

Quotes: Conscious Breathing

“Within us is the power to access our breath and find the space where stillness and peace reside.” _ - Unknown

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.” _ - William James

References:

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