

# WHAT IS EFFICIENT BREATHING?

## THE EFFICIENT WAY TO BREATHE IS:

- **THROUGH THE NOSE**
- **INTO THE LOWER RIBS**
- **SOFT, SLOW, & STEADY**

Efficient or functional breathing effectively exchanges oxygen and carbon dioxide between our cells and the air around us, enabling optimal cellular function and facilitating performance of the brains, organs, and body tissues.

How should we breathe for optimal health?

Efficient & functional breathing involves breathing in and out through the nose with a light, slow, and regular breath originating from the diaphragm. Ideally this would be our breathing pattern when we're at rest, asleep, and doing light to moderate exercise.



**The Breath  
and Balance**

# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FUNCTIONAL & EFFICIENT BREATHING?

Our breath impacts every system in our body , including how we move, sleep, and feel.

- Efficiently brings oxygen to the body, facilitating performance
- Maintains blood pH balance, reducing work of kidneys
- Helps to maintain open airways
- Contributes to a state of calm and overall well-being
- Assists in movement of body's fluids & lymph system
- Enhances digestive capabilities
- Supports a healthy autonomic nervous system
- Increases emotional resiliency
- Supports spinal mobility and stability



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# WHY THE NOSE?

We can breathe through our nose or our mouth. Many mammals such as horses, cannot breathe through their mouth. We evolved to breathe through our nose. Mouths are for speaking and eating. Noses are for breathing.

Our nose filters, warms, and humidifies the air we bring into our lungs. Our nose produces nitric oxide, which improves our immune function and assists with oxygen delivery into our cells. We can smell when breathe through our nose, allowing us to be more aware of our surroundings. When we breathe through our nose, we let our body know that we're okay. When we breathe through our nose, our breath is naturally a little lighter.



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# WHY THE LOWER RIBS?

The lower ribs is the location of your diaphragm, your breathing muscle and core stabilizer. We have more transfer sites for our blood to exchange air in our lower lungs. When we breathe into our lower ribs, we are helping our bodies relax and know we are okay.

Our breath connects to our autonomic nervous system.

Helps the body to Rest & Digest

- Inhale through nose
- Movement in lower ribs
- Breathe slow & steady
- Breathe soft & quiet

Helps the body get ready for action, to fight or flee.

- Inhale through mouth
- Movement in upper chest
- Breathe fast & irregular
- Breathe heavy & loud



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# WHY SOFT, SLOW & STEADY?

Breathe in just the amount of air you need, not more. When we breathe lighter, we tend to breathe smaller breaths. Breathing smaller breaths allows carbon dioxide to build up slightly in our lungs and in our blood. We need carbon dioxide in our blood for the oxygen to be released from our red blood cells and enter our cell tissue. When we breathe slower the air is in our lungs longer which allows for greater time for oxygen transfer our blood if needed.



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# HOW ARE YOU BREATHING?

Take a moment, put one hand on your chest, one hand on your lower ribs and simply notice how you are breathing.

Are you breathing in through your nose?  
Is your breath soft, slow, and steady?  
Can you breathe into your lower ribs?  
Can you let the hand on your chest be still with your chest relaxed while your lower hand moves slightly with your breath.

Your breathing habits are a result of your life experience and history.

With some attention, patience, time, and mindful exercises you can alter your breathing habits and impact how you sleep, move, and feel.

Take a class with The Breath and Balance to learn more.  
[www.thebreathandbalance.com](http://www.thebreathandbalance.com)



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