

Abdominal Breathing

Introduction

How do most people breathe in a normal state? All up in the chest.

We have 7½ billion cells in the lungs for breathing. Most people only use the upper part of the lungs to breathe and do not generate enough pressure from their breathing to use the whole lung.

In Qi Gong use **an abdominal breathing style**. This requires co-ordination of all the muscles in the abdomen and the back. The origin of this force comes from the diaphragm.

Important Point

To change from a normal breathing style (chest) to an abdominal breathing style. If we train the abdominal area we will cause free communication between all areas of the body. This develops the lower part of the lung makes better use of the lungs.

Method

1. Inhale to lower abdomen and feel abdomen rise or “inflate”
Exhale out (abdomen shrinks)

There should be no movement of the chest. Use the force of the muscles around the diaphragm and abdomen.

Try to inhale air (Qi) into the abdomen so when you breathe in the abdomen moves out. At this time a ball of Qi also enters the abdomen and expands. As you exhale the abdomen sinks and the Qi ball shrinks.

2. Use the **nose** to breathe. The Chinese believe that the mouth should not be used for breathing but eating! The mouth is only used to breathe when you are nervous or in special conditions (exercise, using sound as part of a Qi Gong exercise).
3. Find the **beginning (head) of the Qi**. Your thinking then follows the head of the Qi. Catch the breath as it enters the nostrils and follow it to Dan Tian with the mind. When you breathe out feel the head of the Qi rise up and out through the nose, following with the mind.

If your thought follows the movement of the Qi then the Qi will not become stuck in the chest. The aim here is to try to set up a connection between the brain and the Qi.

4. You can use abdominal breathing to inhale healthy, energising Qi and exhale anything you don't want in the body, e.g. ache or pain, emotion.
5. You can practice medium (inhale for one second and out for one second), slow and fast breathing. Compare how each of them feels and which you are most comfortable with. Medium speed is used for most Qigong exercises.

Key Points

As you exhale be conscious of the Qi leaving the nose. Do not allow the Qi to ascend to the head as this is waste Qi and can cause dizziness.



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