



Awakening Spiritual Radiance: The Transcendental Influence of Complete Breathing in Pranayam

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ABSTRACT

Pranayam, the ancient practice of breath control in yog, encompasses a vast array of breathing techniques, each with unique benefits for health, personal development, and overall well-being. Among these techniques, "Complete Breathing" stands out as a fundamental practice designed to maximize one's potential within the body safely. This article explores the significance and therapeutic effects of Complete Breathing, shedding light on its transformative impact on physical and mental health.

Complete Breathing involves utilizing every part of the lung for optimal breathing, ensuring maximum returns in terms of health benefits. The definitions of "full" and "empty" in the context of breathing are relative and expand, as individual's progress in their practice. This article emphasizes the importance of learning and mastering Complete Breathing as a foundational skill for achieving holistic well-being.

The author, a Traditional Acupuncturist with over 40 years of clinical practice, observed that many people were not utilizing their lung capacity optimally, leading to various health issues. Through the integration of Complete Breathing techniques, individuals experienced improvements in health and recovery, becoming a clear parameter for assessing their overall well-being.

Complete Breathing consists of four parts: slow and deep inhalation (puraka), breath retention after inhalation (antar kumbhaka), slow and complete exhalation through the mouth or nose (rechaka), and breath retention after exhalation (bahir kumbhaka). The therapeutic effects of Complete Breathing become evident as the breath duration surpasses 60 seconds, with notable benefits including enhanced general health, improved immunity, and illness prevention.

A study involving 5 participants, spanning different age groups, demonstrated significant improvements in breath duration and overall health with consistent practice of 30 minutes of Complete Breathing daily. The findings revealed that individuals achieved breath durations ranging from 90 seconds to 2.5 minutes/breath, correlating with substantial relief and enhanced health parameters.

The paper delves into the physiological effects of Complete Breathing, emphasizing its role in optimizing lung capacity, increasing oxygen intake, and promoting efficient oxygen delivery to all parts of the body. The enhanced oxygenation triggers a cascade of positive changes,



including improved blood quality, increased red blood cell production, heightened haemoglobin levels, and overall qualitative changes in cellular function.

Complete Breathing emerges as a potent and effective therapeutic intervention, offering transformative benefits to individuals, whether considered normal or undergoing health challenges. The article positions breath duration as a key indicator of health and immunity, establishing a new paradigm for understanding and fostering well-being in the population.

Keywords: Yog, Yogic diet, Lifestyle disease, Techniques of Yog, Ashtanga Yog, Yog Aasan, Pranayam, Dhyana. Obesity, Spirituality, Weight Loss, Pranayam, Complete Breathing,

Introduction

Pranayam is understood as control, modulation and changing of breathing pattern with specific beneficial effects to be garnered. There must be at least close to about 100 variations in breathing patterns with different ratios and timings. Each one of them is associated with some special significance for breath and its effects on health, personal development and growth of the person in newer dimensions.

Complete breathing is the very basic technique to learn the skill and knowledge of maximizing your potential within your own body – safely. This technique focusses on using every part of the lung for every aspect of breathing to ensure the maximum returns are obtained. One of the things to note are: meaning of full and empty. These definitions are always measured relatively, so they keep getting stretched at all times as you grow into your own practice.

Today's full may not be the same as fullness experienced and actually measured volumetrically in a month's time after regular practice. Similarly – today's empty feeling of lungs may reduce in volume, after a month's practice. These changes will continue to occur – although in smaller increments as you reach closer to your 100% ability.

Complete breathing is an exercise system designed by us, to assist people improve their health and wellbeing. As a Traditional

Acupuncturist, it was shocking to note that people were not utilizing their lung power optimally and paying a hefty price in terms of suffering and illnesses. Over the last 40+ years of clinical practice and observing ill health and patients recovering as an effect of treatment and use of complete breathing techniques, I feel I must share this technology of breath with everyone. People maintained their health better without treatment in a preventive health concept with practicing complete breathing. It became such a clear parameter of health; that today we use the breath as a parameter of evaluating the status of the person and gauge their level of fragility or strength of their bodies and links to their level of immunity.

Let me take a basic example of breath. Most people believe they are breathing adequately all the time. Let us do a brief observation. Hold your breath till you are close to suffocation and when released we suddenly find the need to breathe deeply and quickly to ensure the depleted oxygen is compensated. So we know that lack of air (O₂) is bad for us. When we consume our normal breath – whatever we are used to, we feel Ok. But does it not stand to reason that when we breathe fuller and provide more oxygen, then we should without any hesitation and doubt, must feel better.



So what is complete breathing?

We all are aware that breath consists of 4 parts. They are breathing in slow and deep (puraka), holding your breath as long as you can (antar kumbhaka), breathing out slowly and completely through the mouth in early stages and the proficient can breathe out through the nose (rechaka), & holding your breath again when lungs are empty (bahir kumbhaka). This is a very simple technique, but starts to grow in therapeutic effects as soon as the single breath starts to cross 60 seconds. As you get closer to 2 minutes/breath you start developing very good health parameters and your immunity is quite high. When you cross this threshold, then you find your health taking you to realms beyond normal in terms of lots of qualities. We will restrict ourselves to general health, improved immunity and preventing illness as the focus of this article.

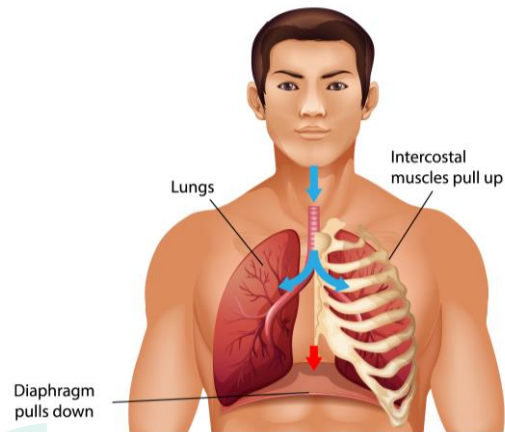
We trained 5 healthy people - young age group – 23-50 years and older age group 60+ years. It was recommended that every one practice 30 minutes of complete breathing every day. The changes were phenomenal to say the least.- rather spectacular. 3 of them reached 2 minutes/breath consistently; 1 reached 2.5 minutes/breath and one reached 90-100 seconds/breath. When this data was compared to patient groups who were benefitting – their scope of improvement ranged to 50-75 seconds/breath. On achieving these levels, they experienced tremendous relief and improvement in their health and suffering parameters.

What does complete breathing do and achieve?

1. Active breathing encourages the small muscles of the rib cage, shoulder, abdomen, back and diaphragm to work to their full potential, thus providing

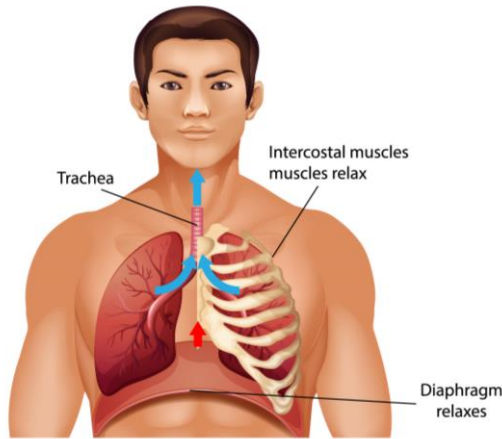
maximum lung capacity within your personal means.

2. When lungs are fully expanded – naturally more air volume is within the lungs.
3. This means more oxygen as 18 -21% of air consists of oxygen. So increase in volume leads to increase in oxygen molecules available for lungs to absorb.



Inhalation

4. When you hold for as long as you can – you are encouraging every oxygen molecule to be absorbed and maximum carbon di oxide to be returned to the lungs.
5. When you feel the desperate need to breathe out – most of the lungs are filled with carbon di oxide and minimal oxygen is left in lungs for last stage absorption.
6. When you start breathing out completely all the carbon di oxide is excreted. During the last stages of breathing out the final exchange of carbon di oxide occurs and the lungs are nearly empty – except for minimal dead space left. Exhaled air at a minimum contains about 16% oxygen & 5% carbon di oxide. I am quite convinced that slow deep breathers will have better oxygen utilisation.

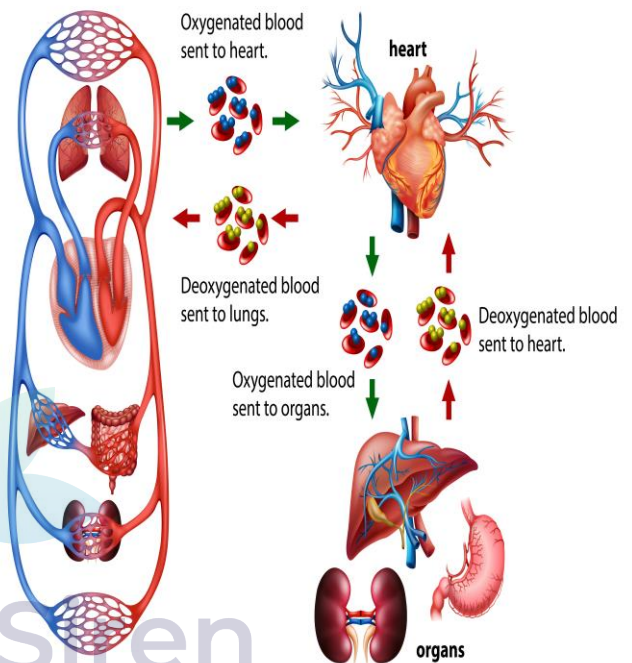


Exhalation

7. Holding the breath after breathing out is to enable the body to live without oxygen/minimal oxygen/carbon dioxide level & prepare the lungs for difficult times in life.
8. Then the process is repeated all over again - during the 30 minutes of this pranayam exercise of complete breathing.
9. As you are breathing harder and more oxygen is available, the blood flows faster and more RBC's are used to absorb as much oxygen as possible.
10. As you increase the oxygen uptake consistently, the RBC's fall short of providing for the demand for increased oxygen absorption. This then sends a message to the bone marrow to produce more RBC's as the requirement has increased.
11. Thus over time more RBC's are produced and hemoglobin can thus increase and the cycle continues on.
12. As you cross higher levels of breathing – 1 minute, 1.5 minutes, 2 minutes, etc, this cycle keeps repeating itself, thus improving your blood, oxygen carrying capacity, efficient delivery and thus more oxygen to all parts of body.
13. Oxygen does not and cannot stay in the body without action. So as soon as more molecules of oxygen arrive in the blood

and the body, the oxygen starts to enable every cell to become more alive. Whether it's a brain cell, liver cell, skin cell – they all respond with better quality thus leading to qualitative change in the person & thus his well-being.

Human Gas Exchange Process



14. So do not be surprised if health improves, organ functions improve, you feel warm and more energetic, your brain works faster and more efficiently, etc.
15. There are also some higher perception changes that can occur. But that is for another discussion.
16. The overall oxygen absorption rate must be increasing to provide such benefits. So exhaled air may have less percentage of oxygen – say 10-15% giving the feeling of freshness, energy, etc.

When considering all this about complete breathing and its efficacy to the human body, I feel this basic pranayam of learning



to breathe right can achieve tremendous benefits for the human body. This has been applied in our yog sessions and most practitioners have found it tremendously

helpful in changing their lives, becoming calmer, less stressed, recovery from lots of ills and overall wellbeing.

Conclusion:

Complete breathing – which is the basics of pranayam has been observed to be very powerful and effective in therapeutic intervention amongst our clients – patients and people considered normal.

Our values of normality also have been tweaked with this elevated understanding of pranayam. Today, we can state categorically and confidently that any person who can practice complete breathing with each breath lasting over 2 minutes will notice a very high level of immunity for their body. Similarly if it drops below 60 seconds, there could be issues of health – minor or major. This has taken our understanding of health, immunity and breath to a much higher level with an ability to foster health amongst our population.

- A 3 minute video on complete breathing:

<https://youtu.be/sTIAA-27Nwg?si=f8ccNcVnndYLdigl>



Health Siren



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