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| **‘Diaphragmatic Breathing’: The Foundation For A Healthy Life** |
| The diaphragm is **one of the biggest muscles in the body.** |
| And while we have many breathing muscles (& many accessory breathing muscles) **the diaphragm is the primary one**… |
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| This lower part of the lungs are diffused with blood vessels… |
| And it’s where the most efficient exchange of gases takes place… |
| Making **'diaphragmatic breathing' the foundation of healthy respiration, breathing & living.** |
| We need to learn to easily, naturally & automatically breathe into these lower breathing spaces & make this our unconscious habit. |
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| In many ways, ‘diaphragmatic breathing’ isn’t as much a ‘technique’ as is should be your automatic, unconscious way of breathing at all times of the day…*(although you can also practice this consciously — especially in moments of high stress — to bring about greater calm & balance.)* |

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| **So, what prevents us from doing this?** |
| Many men often deliberately assume the military posture of “gut in, chest out” to project an image of strength & courage.  |
| And this can become an automatic unconscious chronic posture that blocks full free breathing into the belly… |
| Many women are also concerned about their appearance & so they also hold their belly in as much as possible... |
| *(A flat tummy, after all, is what all the fashion magazines promote as ideal & beautiful!)* |
| Tension or discomfort due to digestive problems or menstrual changes can also cause habitual holding, tension, contraction in the abdomen. |
| Full free smooth rhythmic diaphragmatic breathing can wash away all this trauma*— it can serve to heal these issues.* |
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| By breathing down in your belly you also stop breathing high up in your chest which is a high-stress & anxiety pattern that pushes your body into fight-or-fight… & is linked with all links of respiratory & health problems. |

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| **In any case, we need to relax, breathe fully & breathe freely if we want to live fully & freely… & this begins with diaphragmatic breathing. Like this:** |
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| You can, of course, practice this sitting or standing… |
| As you do, it helps to put your hand *(or interlace your hands together on your stomach — as shown in the graphic above)* & follow your belly as it expands outwards during the inhale & contracts back in *(belly button traveling toward the spine)* during the exhale… |
| You can also put your hands on the sides of your waist... squeezing your fingers and hands together as you exhale. |
| And using your inhale to push your hands apart and spread your fingers open. |
| *(This is also known as ‘Horizontal Breathing’, based on this motion)* |
| You can exercise and strengthen your breathing muscles by creating additional pressure or resistance with your hands as you inhale... |
| Although a great way to practice that I highly recommend is by lying down & observing the motion of your belly going up & down. |
| Even better, you can get a light book or other object, place it on your belly & raise it/lower it through your belly breathing. |
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| When you inhale, lift the book up with your breath. |
| When you breathe out, let the book (or object) settle down again. |
| **By learning to breathe slow & down in your belly (diaphragm) not only can you calm your body in moments of stress… but you also build an unconscious pattern/habit that helps you stay relaxed, balanced & centered as your automatic baseline**😃 |

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