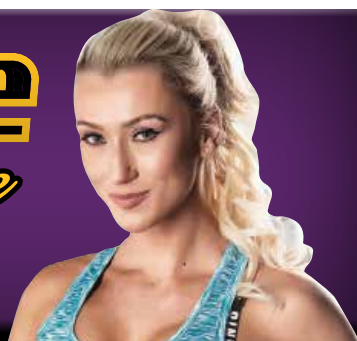


In Fine Fettle

with Elouise

Weekender collaborates with Elouise Voget from Impulse Fitness Studio to share with our readers how to keep their workout and wholesome eating habits in check! For more info, contact Elouise on instagram: @fitness_el



THE AMAZING BENEFITS OF BREATHING

What is breath? Do you ever stop and marvel at the magical and mysterious occurrence that is breath? We've become so used to it as a common every day/every second occurrence that "just happens," that we don't ever step back and wonder why, or how, for that matter. Few of us actually realize just how powerful our breath really is.

JUST BREATHE

We've all heard it before, but do any of us really know what is truly meant? And do those telling us to just breathe even know the wisdom of their own words?

So, here's the great news: Breathing has tons of physical and mental benefits. Now, here's the better news: Breathing is easy! This whole time it's been right under (and in) our nose - The most effortless exercise, ever.

PROPER BREATHING

Modern men, and especially women (listen up ladies!), have a bad habit of "shallow breathing." Short breaths to the upper chest characterize this incorrect breathing - so open up (your diaphragm, that is), and take a long, deep breath! By fully filling our core, we are practicing proper breathing, which is known as "diaphragmatic breathing."

While breathing is an involuntary bodily function - which happens all the time, non-stop (until we die) - we have the ability to control it at will. This control of the breath is known as Pranayama.

Pranayama is a Sanskrit word made up of two roots: Prana (Life Force) and yama (control). There's a reason this breathing practice is such a big deal in Eastern cultures. It's about time we Westerners utilize this tool, too.

SIT YOURSELF DOWN

Sit comfortably, with a tall and erect spine. Bring your shoulders up, then roll and drop them down on your back. Once you have perfect alignment, place your hands on your stomach to create a diamond shape around your navel.

For each part of the breath, use a counting ratio of 1-4-2. For example: if you slowly inhale for five seconds, hold the breath for 20 seconds and then exhale for ten.

TAKE A BREATH

Inhale deeply through your nose - aim for the center of that diamond shape over your navel and imagine that you are filling up a balloon. Begin by filling the stomach first, then the ribs, followed by the upper chest. Remember to continuously count each of your inhales.

HOLD IT

Hold your breath for four times longer than your inhale. If this feels uncomfortable (like your face is turning blue or you're starting to feel like you'll be unconscious soon), reduce the inhale time until you build up those lungs! Never force anything and listen to your body. After all, it is your temple.

By holding your breath, you are giving it ample time to travel deep into your bronchial tubes and replace the stale air trapped inside the millions of air sacs in your lungs with new, fresh oxygen.

LET IT GO

Exhale slowly for two times longer than your inhale, starting with the stomach, ribs and upper chest as if you are squeezing all of the air out of a balloon. A longer exhale ensures a larger expulsion of carbon dioxide and wastes in the body.

Repeat steps one through four for at least ten minutes and try to make it a daily practice.

BREATHING AND YOGA

Breathing is an essential part of Yoga. In Yoga, one flows with the breath, but beginners tend to hold their breath as they hold a pose. I've seen it time and time again. Ideally, when the spine is curved and we fold forward, we let out a full exhale and when we are stretching and expanding, we inhale. Once we come to a steady pose, it's important to maintain steady breathing. Although it may seem difficult to remember to keep breathing while you're trying to focus on balancing on one foot, one hand, one head, etc., a Yoga flow isn't complete without consistent and coordinated breaths. Not only does deep breathing bring fresh oxygen to your muscles and organs, but it also trains you to focus inward during your Yoga practice.

BREATHING AND EXERCISE

Better breathing means better performance. When you exercise, your muscles need more oxygen. As you work out and use energy, your body is producing lactic acid and carbon dioxide, which causes fatigue. But again, by breathing properly and consistently, you are maintaining high energy levels while helping your body dispense the wastes and therefore working out longer... harder, better, faster, stronger.

BREATHING AND PAIN RELIEF

Endless studies show that slow, deep breathing relieves pains. This is because slow diaphragmatic breathing has a direct effect on our sympathetic nervous system. Additionally, short, shallow breaths can make our body tense, which increases pain, while long, deliberate breaths have a calming effect on our body, which releases pain.

BREATHING AND STRESS RELIEF

Our modern, fast-paced life is exciting and we have tons of opportunities that didn't exist a century ago, but it can also be overly stressful. Our multi-tasking age causes mental fog and exhaustion, but this can also be overcome with Pranayama. By counting and following the breath, we are forcing the mind to sit down and calm itself, in turn calming our central nervous system. By training our attention to stay on the breath, we are practicing discipline and focus. With this clarity, we can perform better at work, in our relationships and life itself.

KEEP BREATHING

Learning and applying breathing techniques is simple. We were born knowing how to breathe; now all we have to do is consciously control it a few minutes per day. Our breath has the power to ease or aid just about anything. Now, with all of these benefits, who wouldn't want to take a shot at this painlessly basic procedure? The power is (quite literally) within you. Use it!

FEEL YOUNG, FEEL FRESH

Summer is not just the season of dehydration. It is the season where people are no longer able to relate the freshness they ever felt with respect to their skin. Skin breakouts, pimples and acne caused by the heat are a very common issue during summer. What makes it worse is the appearance of blackheads which clogs the pores thus giving a very dull look to the skin. Maintaining a healthy diet and a lifestyle is a must in every walk of life, but what poses as a hindrance over here is our inability in taking efforts to keep our skin healthy. Stress and anxiety have taken the front seat of our minds, where "being healthy" is just an option, and not a necessity. To look healthy is a hard work that needs to be made a priority by pouring love and dedication into it. After all, only we can give a fresh look to our skin, isn't it?

CARROT

Rich in Vitamin A, carrot acts as a shield in keeping pimples, acne and pigmentation at bay. One can incorporate carrot in their daily life in various ways. Consuming raw or making a juice out of it, will not just keep the skin young, but will keep the everlasting glow alive.



WATER

This is one drink which acts as a potion for dull skin. Consuming 2 litres of water on a daily basis can act wonders where not just the body is hydrated, but even the skin is rejuvenated.

ORANGE

Vitamin C is not just a vitamin, but a blessing. Consuming 2 oranges daily is not just beneficial for the skin, but for overall health, thus keeping one healthy and happy.

TOMATO

Rich in beta carotene, tomato acts as a skin booster, which not just eradicates pimples, acne and blackheads, but protects the skin from the harmful UV rays. Having chopped tomato on a daily basis can give one the skin, they ever wished to have.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is difficult, not impossible. Incorporate the above in your daily life and you will experience the freshness, your skin must have never felt before.

