

3 -Part Breath

Recommended for all dosha types

Directions:

Lie down on a comfortable place with your feet on the floor a little wider than hip-distance and your knees resting against each other. Make sure your low back is in a neutral position. Place your right hand on your low belly at the navel and your left hand to the chest. Bring your awareness to your breath. Notice if you feel your breath under your right hand or left hand more. No judgment, just notice. Also notice - do you feel more comfortable in the inhale or in the exhale? Where do you spend more time? Are there areas of the breath that feel tight or constricted? Is the breath smooth, or is it ragged?

Now, slowly begin to bring your awareness down into the breath in the belly, under the right hand. Slowly begin to deepen the breath here: inhaling letting the belly rise up to the ceiling, exhaling, letting the belly drop back to your spine, squeezing the navel in slightly at the end to release any stale carbon dioxide and toxins. Continue, without pauses, letting the breath deepen, stretch, and smooth out. Imagine there is a balloon in the lower belly that inflates on the inhale and deflates on the exhale at the same, constant steady rate. Focus on just this movement of the breath for 3-4 minutes.

Next take your hands and wrap them around yourself as if giving yourself a hug - right hand to the left ribs, left hand to the right ribs. Begin to move the breath into your ribcage,

expanding outwards as you inhale, and in towards each other as you exhale. Focus just on this movement of the breath for 1-2 minutes.

Then take your right hand and place it on your breast bone (sternum). You can take your left hand and place it under your right armpit. Try to feel the breath lifting the sternum up and spreading the upper ribs that you can feel under the arm as you inhale, and as you exhale feel the breastbone move back in and down. This is the most subtle of the three- part breath, so just stay with the intention.

Finally, putting all three pieces together. Starting with the lower belly, draw in about 1/3 of the breath. Then move up to the ribs, drawing in 1/3 of the breath, and finally with the upper chest, 1/3 of the breath. Then to exhale, imagine all three sections coming together as one, and exhale all together for the same length of time as the inhale, ending by drawing the navel to the spine. Begin again, 1/3, 1/3, and 1/3 as you inhale, and then altogether exhaling. Continue for 5 minutes or so without straining or effort. If you ever feel like you are gasping for air, you are trying too hard. Relax, and do what you can.