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This article is about ‘breathing for good health’.

Breathe your way to Zen ... and good health! Read on to learn three simple ways to breathe out the stress, and breathe in the Zen, increasing your mental wellbeing and your physical wellbeing.

And don't forget, our last article was about mental wellness. Click [here](#) to learn nine things you can do to improve your mental wellness, and to access all our previous articles.

If you're interested in our previous articles, please click [here](#)

Breathe Out The Bad Stuff ... Breathe In The Good Stuff :

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If you've got a suggestion for an article, or there's something more you would like to hear about, please send us an email by clicking [here](#)

Did you know that diaphragmatically breathing (or what is often referred to as deep-breathing) helps us maintain physical and emotional wellbeing? When we're stressed out, we tend to over-breathe (rapid, shallow breaths), or under-breathe (hold our breath), which can cause dizziness or hyperventilation. However, when we breathe deeply, we're not only staying calm, but we're avoiding knee-jerk reactions, and we might even stave off a panic attack.

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Studies show that on a physical level, deep breathing increases brain functioning, soothes the nervous system, cleanses the lungs, and promotes quality sleep. Amazing that simple breathing can do all that!

So how do you get the most out of your breath? Use your diaphragm. Follow these steps to learn how to diaphragmatically breathe.

1. Lie on your back on the floor with your knees slightly bent.
2. Lay the palms of your hands on your stomach just below your rib cage, middle fingers touching each other.
3. Take a slow deep breath in through your nose. As your diaphragm fills up, your stomach will slightly expand causing your fingertips to separate.
4. Slowly breathe out. As your diaphragm empties, your stomach will return to its normal state and your fingertips will come back together.
5. Keep breathing in and out – using your diaphragm.

So, if you have occasional worries, or even full-blown anxiety attacks, you suffer from trauma, or just maybe you want to increase your physical health, then try the following exercises. Incorporate them into your daily routine, and reap the benefits.

1. **The Breath Square** : Sit with your eyes closed and turn your attention to your breathing. Be aware of the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves

your nostrils. Using the diaphragmatic breathing, breathe in for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, breathe out for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4. *Repeat as many times as necessary until you feel a state of calm.*

2. **The 4-7-8 Breath** : Start by breathing in and out slowly to become aware of your natural breathing rhythm. Let the breath flow in and out effortlessly, as you prepare your lungs for deeper breaths. Using the diaphragmatic breathing, inhale for a count of four, hold for a count of seven, exhale for a count of eight. *Repeat four times.*
3. **Alternate Nostril Breathing** : Using the diaphragmatic breathing, hold your right thumb over your right nostril and inhale deeply through your left nostril. At the peak of inhalation, close off your left nostril with your ring finger and release your thumb off your right nostril, then exhale through your right nostril. Now inhale through your right nostril, then close off your right nostril with the right thumb and exhale through your left nostril. *Start slowly with one or two sets and gradually increase the number. Sit quietly for a few moments after you have finished.*

Remember ... breathe out the bad, and breathe in the good.

If you would like some help to find your Zen, contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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