

BREATHLETE PRESENTS

INTRO TO BREATHWORK FOR ATHLETES

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We turn high performing athletes into BREATHLETES so they can reach peak performance instead of peak burn out. Through the practice of yoga, meditation and breathwork, every athlete can achieve a healthier body, clearer mind, and better results.

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MAXIMIZE PERFORMANCE

SIMPLE TECHNIQUES FOR BIG IMPACT

CENTERING BREATH

Goal: Reset the body and mind from activity or stress induced fluctuations

Benefits: Centers one's awareness, increases focus and concentration, prepares body and mind for activity

Time to Use: Before any activity

Length of Practice: 3-7 rounds

Technique:

- Close the eyes. Notice and observe the natural, unmodified flow of the breath.
- Take a deep inhale through the nose followed by a full exhale through the mouth. This is one round.
- With each inhale fill up the entire body with air from bottom to top. With each exhale empty the body completely from top to bottom. Imagine filling and emptying a jug with water all the way.
- Repeat 3 to 7 times or as long as it feels comfortable.
- Once the exercise feels complete, with the eyes still closed, return to the natural, most comfortable breath.
- Notice any potential changes and shifts in the body and mind. Allow these changes to settle in and be processed in the body.
- Tilt the chin towards the chest, open the eyes with a few gentle flutters of the eyelids and lift the gaze back up.

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FIVE COUNT BREATH

Goal: Slow the breath to ~5 breaths per minute. Increase Heart Rate Variability (HRV) by lengthening and coordinating inhales and exhales to equal length

Benefits: Increased oxygen levels. Reduced stress and anxiety. Improved concentration. Balanced activity of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system.

Time to Use: any time there is a few minutes break in activity, in between episodes of challenging physical or mental demands (during changeovers, half time, in between periods, before or after practice & competition)

Length of Practice: Varied. A few breaths to 20 minutes. For best results practice for at least 5 minutes.

Technique:

- Find a comfortable posture either sitting on a chair, cushion, couch or laying down on the back. If seated on a chair or couch, avoid leaning against the backrest. Have the arms and legs relaxed, spine active, sternum lifted and shoulders relaxed away from the ears. Gently close the eyes.
- Take a few inhales through the nose followed by exhales through the mouth. Allow the body to relax and the muscles to soften with each exhale.
- Turn the attention inward and notice the natural flow of the breath without feeling the need to change it. It may be deep, shallow, even or erratic. It may come and go in & out through the nose or the mouth.
- Seal the lips and start breathing only in and out through the nose, trying to keep the inhales the same length as the exhalations.
- Take note of how long the inhales and exhales last by counting the seconds each take (likely 2-3 seconds each).
- Do this for a few cycles of breath. Start extending both the inhales and exhales until reaching up to 5 second length for each.
- Do this for 5-10 minutes or as long as it feels comfortable. Feel free to reduce or increase the length for each cycle based on individual capacity and comfort level.
- Once the exercise feels complete, tilt the chin towards the chest, open the eyes with a few gentle flutters of the eyelids and lift the gaze back up.

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RECOVERY BREATH AKA "1, 2 Breath"

Goal: Lower one's heart rate and activate the parasympathetic nervous system by lengthening ones exhale.

Benefits: Calming the body, mind and emotions by tapping into the rest & digest function of body mechanics

Time to Use: during and after moments of physical or mental adversity or anxiety, any time there is a need to reduce one's heart rate and "catch one's breath", between points/plays in a match/game.

Length of Practice: 3-7 rounds

Technique:

- Keep the eyes open or closed depending on the situation.
- Inhale either via nose or mouth and take an elongated exhale via nose or mouth depending on one's aerobic capacity at the moment. This is one round.
- Breathing in or out through the mouth when air hunger is intense is ok. If exhaling through the mouth purse the lips slightly (like blowing out through a straw) to help the evening and lengthening of the exhale.
- Initially do not worry too much about the length of the inhales or exhales, just focus on making the exhales longer than the inhales.
- Keep the breath going and avoid holding it after the inhale or the exhale.
- Repeat these rounds until both the inhales and exhales flow through the nose. If possible bring a slight constriction to the back of the throat (like trying to fog up a mirror) on the exhale. This should make the sound of the exhale mildly audible.
- Try to come to a point where the exhales are twice as long as the inhales.
- Once heart rate is reduced and mind is focused return to normal breathing.

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