

Breathing, Longevity And Healthy Life: An Introduction To The Science Of Better Living

When we are born, the first thing we do is take a deep breath. The last thing we do leaving the world is stop breathing. Life is what occurs between the first and the last breath.

It is commonly believed that food is the most important source providing the human body with energy. However, we can survive several weeks without food, several days without water, yet only a few minutes without air.

As commonly defined, breathing is the bodily process of inhalation and exhalation - the process of taking in oxygen from inhaled air and releasing carbon dioxide by exhalation. Yet, according to ancient esoteric wisdom, air is an invisible 'food' that in addition to oxygen and nitrogen (among other specific substances) contains unique energy element called 'Prana'.

'Prana' is defined by ancient Hindu Ayurvedic and Yoga philosophical science as life-force energy.

Our modern scientific theories regarding the breath confine themselves to the effects of oxygen and its use within the circulatory system, while neglecting information provided by the ancient Ayurvedic and Yoga science that 'Prana' affects human body through the nervous system as well, by nourishing and vitalizing it.

Let us not discount the possibility that learning about the 'science' of breath may be the best and fastest way to good health and longevity.

It is very important to understand that the lungs themselves will just "sit there in the human chest and do nothing" unless they get support from the other parts of the body that help with their proper functioning.

The air is drawn into the lungs by the action of the diaphragm; a flat sheet like muscle stretched across the chest, separating the chest from the abdomen. The diaphragm action is almost as automatic as that of the heart.

When diaphragm expands it increases the size of the chest and lungs, and the air is drawn into the vacuum of lungs. When the diaphragm relaxes; the chest and the lungs contract and the air is expelled from the lungs.

"The amount of air inhaled and exhaled in an average human breath (tidal volume) is about one-eighth the amount that can be inhaled after exhaling as much as possible (vital capacity). Nerve centers in the brain regulate the movements of muscles of respiration (diaphragm and chest wall muscles). Blood in the pulmonary circulation brings carbon dioxide from the tissues to be exhaled and takes up oxygen from the air in the pulmonary alveoli to carry it to the heart and the rest of... "

- Encyclopedia Britannica

Why do we breathe incorrectly? Naturally, the first Homo sapiens had no need for instructions about breathing. Impediments of civilization however, have changed our natural environment, resulting in altered patterns of walking, standing and sitting. This change is not kind to our ergonomics, and may have negative long-term consequences.

According to some studies, the percentage of civilized people who breathe correctly is extremely small and the results are apparent among the growing number of people with stooping shoulders, contracted chests and an increasing volume of respiratory organ failures as well as respiratory system diseases.

To compensate for the abnormal manner in which we are performing our daily activities; one should seek and apply knowledge about proper breathing to our everyday living. As the ways of our everyday living change, we must ensure that those changes accommodate our bodies and aid in maintaining our wellbeing- and that of course includes everything that will contribute to our wellbeing - and it begins with a full, deep, and aware breath.

As we get older, the larger sections of the lungs are no longer involved in the breathing process. The body is in a constant state of oxygen deprivation. This causes not only respiratory diseases but also disorders of circulatory system; liver, kidney, pancreas, gastrointestinal tract and many more.

Why is it so important to breath correctly? If the blood is not fully purified by the regenerative process of the lung functioning, it will return back to its cycle fully contaminated by toxins and deprived of oxygen. These impurities and insufficient oxygen content in blood will eventually manifest as some form of disease in the human body (most often classified as cancer).

Not only every part of human body is vitalized by the oxygen, but the very act of digestion depends on oxygen. This accounts for the fact that weak lungs and poor digestion are so often found together.

Proper and natural breathing in addition to supplying adequate amount of oxygen to the body provides exercise to the internal organs and muscles. And thus, in simplified terms the circle of proper functioning human body completes and continues.

"Breathe. Let go. And remind yourself that this very moment is the only one you know you have for sure."

- Oprah Winfrey

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