

7-11 Breathing

We in the Western world seem to have forgotten how important controlled breathing can be to our mental and physical wellbeing. The following disciplines all place attention on correct breathing: Yoga, Meditation, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Martial Arts etc.

There is a particular form of breathing which can be a great help (no matter what state you are in) if you are . . .

- Feeling stressed
- Struggling with panic attacks
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling agitated or anxious
- Suffering from "nerves" or anxiety

To lower stress

The secret is to make each "out" breath last longer than each "in" breath. This has the effect of stimulating the body's natural relaxation mechanism. It stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system. A simple and effective way to do this is to use a simple counting method whilst paying attention to your breathing.

You can do it anywhere – in bed, on a bus or the train, even whilst walking – but avoid doing it when you are driving or operating machinery because it will make you feel drowsy.

Please try this technique for yourself.

You may be able to follow these instructions easily. However, many people find it much easier to learn it from a person, face to face, rather than from instructions. We recommend trying it for yourself **but don't give**

up if it seems too hard or seems not to work.

Learning it face to face can be very much more effective.



Count 1 to 7

First, count from one to seven on each "in" breath . . .



Count 1 to 11

. . . then, counting at the same rate, count from one to eleven on each "out" breath