

## Practice all day

An ideal warm-up to pranayama, which Dr. Nataraj Gandhi says can be practiced all day, is abdominal or diaphragm-level technique: deep breathing from alternate nostrils in the ratio 1:2:2 (inhalation, holding of the breath, exhalation), and, later, practice to 1:4:2.



# Stay calm and breathe long

Ornella D'Souza talks to ayurveda and allopathy practitioners about the cons of breathing wrong and how to set that right

Breathing is perhaps the most taken-for-granted activity. Have you observed how you breathe when you're anxious, in a bad mood, depressed, at leisure, watching TV or eating? Maybe it's time you do, and here's why. Dr. OAM Sukanya Reddy, founder of The Indian School of Breathing, Chennai, explains that one strand of inhalation plus exhalation is "one unit." Above 20 units per minute is shallow breathing or tachypnea, 14-15 units is the average count. But those who inhale 13, for six units per minute, are especially at the extreme of health and mental well-being. "Less or the number of units, long or the life span," Reddy muses. It's not just about breathing long. "It's also about their diaphragm and stomach, intercostal muscles on the chest and ribs, for breathing. But irrespective of how you breathe, expiration (exhalation) must be longer than inspiration (inhalation)."

Dr. OAM Sukanya Reddy, founder of The Indian School of Breathing, Chennai, explains that one strand of inhalation plus exhalation is "one unit." Above 20 units per minute is shallow breathing or tachypnea, 14-15 units is the average count. But those who inhale 13, for six units per minute, are especially at the extreme of health and mental well-being. "Less or the number of units, long or the life span," Reddy muses. It's not just about breathing long. "It's also about their diaphragm and stomach, intercostal muscles on the chest and ribs, for breathing. But irrespective of how you breathe, expiration (exhalation) must be longer than inspiration (inhalation)."

Dr. OAM Sukanya Reddy, founder of The Indian School of Breathing, Chennai, explains that one strand of inhalation plus exhalation is "one unit." Above 20 units per minute is shallow breathing or tachypnea, 14-15 units is the average count. But those who inhale 13, for six units per minute, are especially at the extreme of health and mental well-being. "Less or the number of units, long or the life span," Reddy muses. It's not just about breathing long. "It's also about their diaphragm and stomach, intercostal muscles on the chest and ribs, for breathing. But irrespective of how you breathe, expiration (exhalation) must be longer than inspiration (inhalation)."

It's a guide to fit it around the time the child has to master complex motor skills, says Dr. Gandhi, breath-control guru herself. "The child's taught to sit, walk, grasp objects with hand. But not how to breathe. And then, stress gives a major role."

**Well-being denied**  
Impaired breathing has other repercussions: decrease in performance, alertness, memory and cognitive input; more stress, anxiety, diabetes and glucose intolerance, cardiovascular disease, depression, anxiety, depression and impaired immunity.

Also, possible implications between the heart and lungs, given their close proximity, says Dr. Lakshmi Phatak, director of cardiology, Narayana Super Hospital. "If you don't breathe properly, the lungs become susceptible to viral infections because enough oxygenation doesn't take place in the lungs."

Should breathers contribute to something because they don't breathe, says Dr. Reddy. "It starts with defective pancreas, then diabetes, then high blood pressure. Impaired and overcompensated thorax, which blood and puts pressure on the diaphragm."

Even alternate organs in the body are oxygenated and blood levels in the blood go erratic. Even the skin's texture can corrode. "There can clot and prevent release of toxins," says Dr. Reddy.

**Benefits of yoga**  
Yoga is a source of calm of acute anxiety and depression, chronic. The goal of pranayama (para-



Children practice the anulom vilom breathing technique at The Indian School of Breathing, Chennai

—breath, para—alternate) is reduce the breath-per-minute ratio. However, wrong breathing techniques have lasting consequences.

Yoga practices might prove essential to stir the stove, or type of biological energy—such as prana and aya, jiva (fire and water) and kapha (mucus and earth). So, for instance, some Bhakti, pranayama breathing techniques involve heat in the body if exercise causes heat, acidity and headache and internal injury too. "If you exhale before time in inhalation or in single pose, the air gets lodged at various points in the neck region. This may lead to spinalgia," warns Reddy.

As per Reddy, that, quick breaths, Gandhi adds, is not a pranayama, but should drive, a slow breathing process. It is beneficial, but like dental research (cleaning agent), must not be indulged in everyday. "It shows up oxygen and energy levels, but takes off vitamins from your life," Gandhi says. "A dog

breath, para—alternate) is reduce the breath-per-minute ratio. However, wrong breathing techniques have lasting consequences. Yoga practices might prove essential to stir the stove, or type of biological energy—such as prana and aya, jiva (fire and water) and kapha (mucus and earth). So, for instance, some Bhakti, pranayama breathing techniques involve heat in the body if exercise causes heat, acidity and headache and internal injury too. "If you exhale before time in inhalation or in single pose, the air gets lodged at various points in the neck region. This may lead to spinalgia," warns Reddy.

Children practice the anulom vilom breathing technique at The Indian School of Breathing, Chennai

breath, para—alternate) is reduce the breath-per-minute ratio. However, wrong breathing techniques have lasting consequences. Yoga practices might prove essential to stir the stove, or type of biological energy—such as prana and aya, jiva (fire and water) and kapha (mucus and earth). So, for instance, some Bhakti, pranayama breathing techniques involve heat in the body if exercise causes heat, acidity and headache and internal injury too. "If you exhale before time in inhalation or in single pose, the air gets lodged at various points in the neck region. This may lead to spinalgia," warns Reddy.

As per Reddy, that, quick breaths, Gandhi adds, is not a pranayama, but should drive, a slow breathing process. It is beneficial, but like dental research (cleaning agent), must not be indulged in everyday. "It shows up oxygen and energy levels, but takes off vitamins from your life," Gandhi says. "A dog

**Sleep well**  
Dr. Ramesh Lakshmi, consultant physician at Narayana Super Hospital, warns about pediatric children. Their side and reduce weight. "The obese have fatty always, making it difficult for air to reach their lungs. An extreme stage, it becomes destruction of excessive sleepiness. The heart can't just stop in the sleep."

Those who practice deep breathing, breathe well often sleep. But loud snoring, intermittent breath-

ing, heavy-headed and headache on waking up should ring alarm bells, says Dr. Deepa Dhanraj, clinical director, Sleep Disorder Clinic in Mumbai. "These are signs the brain is not receiving adequate oxygen. Significant periods of difficult breathing at night can cause high blood pressure, nocturia, frequent urination and restless sleep."

On the other hand, shallow breathing can be indicative of a larger issue, not considering times we're battling cold or sinus. Dr. Phalguni Chandra, "While gaining of the heart makes it difficult to walk, to drive, sit, even breathe because of fluid retention in the lungs."

**Breathe easy**  
We can easily manipulate our breathing on understanding the anatomy of the nose. Every 20 minutes, we breathe more through one nostril and then switch over to the other, says Gandhi. Also, breathing from the right nostril, surge east, reflects there's more heat in the body, while the left, chakra east, reflects calmness. When angry, the breath is longer from the right nostril, when lethargic, erratic or restless, it is prolonged on the left nostril. "Check which nostril you're breathing more from and wedge a pillow underneath the opposite arm. Within five minutes, you'll start breathing from the other nostril."

Dr. Devraj suggests oral respiratory-level therapy (OMT) exercises that target muscles used to close and unclose. "Nasal sphincter spasms close through the air flow, which is not a good thing."

ornella.dsouza@timesofindia.com