

# Yoga for Dental Career Longevity

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## ABSTRACT

Dental professionals are always at high risk for musculoskeletal disorders and mental stress due to the nature of their work. This article will discuss work related injuries among dentists and will introduce Yoga Techniques to prevent and recover from these injuries; specifically designed postures will be described to practice in-office time between appointments, as well as breathing techniques and relaxation.

**Aim:** To introduce Yoga practice to Dental Professionals and discuss techniques that are able to prevent and treat common injuries at work. To aquante dental professionals with Meditation, Pranayama (breathing) & Relaxation techniques for their own and their patients benefit.

**Conclusion:** Several studies and tests have shown great improvement implementing Yoga practice into daily life among dental practitioners with different work related health issues. Physical Yoga practice improved postures and strength of the musculoskeletal system, mental relaxation and meditation helps to reduce work related stress and breathing techniques helped to calm and focus the mind. Better health better productivity at work and a better, longer life.

## KEYWORDS

Dentist, Work-related injury, Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD), Yoga, Stretching.

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## INTRODUCTION

Being a dentist for a while, how often have you noticed headaches, back and neck pain, or stiffness in your arms? How many colleagues have complained of serious spine injuries or joint pain? Working full day, without brakes, trying to accept as many clients a day as possible, treating their health problems, often you neglect your own health by focusing on your work?

Musculoskeletal disorders (which include repetitive-motion disorders and conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome and hand-arm vibration syndrome) are among the most common medical problems, affecting at least 7% of the population and accounting for 14% of all doctor visits. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders make up 34% of lost workday injuries. These are the injuries that result from repetitive work, awkward or constrained postures, heavy lifting, pinching grasps, forceful movements, and vibrating tools. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders are the nation's leading job-safety problem, causing more than 600,000 workers to lose work time each year and costing an estimated \$15 to \$20 billion in worker compensation costs and lost productivity.<sup>1</sup>

Musculoskeletal pain is more frequently noted by oral health providers than any other occupational hazard, including communicable diseases and other physical and emotional disorders. A survey published in the Journal of the California Dental Association in February 2002<sup>2</sup> found that 61% of dentists surveyed said they had

experienced work-related neck pain during the year; 51% reported lower-back problems; 44% said they had shoulder pain; 43% had upper-back pain; 38% reported hand pain; 30% mentioned mid-back pain; 14% indicated arm pain; and 10% reported leg pain.

Dentists lose millions of dollars a year because they have to cancel patient appointments or can't work due to musculoskeletal pain. In 1987, dentists had to cancel 1.3 million patient appointments and lost income amounting to \$41 million — more than \$65 million in today's dollars.<sup>3</sup> (At present time, more recent statistics could not be located. Obviously there is need for additional study in this area). There have been a number of studies done on dental hygienists, a population that is overwhelmingly female. Although the tasks performed by hygienists are different, studies of this group may be a good indication both of the risks involved with the types of motions female dental professionals make and of the effects on women of using dental tools in a work environment designed primarily for men.<sup>4</sup>

A study published in September 2002 issue of the American Journal of Industrial Medicine<sup>5</sup> found that a large percentage of dental hygienists reported work-related musculoskeletal disorders, especially in the wrist, neck, and upper back. In fact, more than 90% had experienced at least one musculoskeletal complaint in a 12-month period.

According to the number of participants in those studies and the amount of work dentist loose due to their health issues caused at work, we can definitely say that it is a major problem business wise as well as health wise. And what could be more important than your own health after all?

## METHOD

I am sure you have heard about Yoga, maybe have seen the practice or tried Yoga before. Yoga is an ancient (5000 years old) form of mind and body discipline. Originally Yoga teachings were a path towards enlightenment and purity of the soul. Yoga has entered the western world around 200 years ago and became a very unique form of physical therapeutic exercises for the body, which occupied most of the western gyms nowadays. Yogic breath is used to relieve symptoms of anxiety and panic attacks, relaxation techniques are used to let go of physical stress and meditation is used to free and focus the mind.

The number of yoga practitioners is growing every day. Yoga practice entered corporate groups and offices, cancer patients, schools and army.

In the United States yoga practice has also entered Dental Offices as remedy against work related injuries, that are developed day after day and appearing as threatening towards business and dentist's health.

I would like to introduce five common work related injuries and health complications among dentists, developed by working posture, tools and general environment at the office:

1. Vision Problems
2. Chronic Back Pain
3. Tension Neck Syndrome
4. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
5. Stress

Taking each of these injuries separately one by one, like the complications in a dentist life or their health & business being affected by their work related injuries are growing daily by big numbers.

You may avoid working in pain and discomfort; have an early retirement, and never with poor health conditions by living through your daily routine with Yoga practise and philosophy.

Off course it's impossible to see changes within your body after the first, second or even the 10<sup>th</sup> practice; but bit-by-bit, your body will build a strong foundation for a better healthier life through years of practice.

## VISION

"The fastest way to bring the mind into concentration is through the eyes" -Swami Sitaramananda.<sup>6</sup>

It is said, "the face is the index of the mind and the eyes are the windows of the soul." On a tangible level, eyes are our only windows to the world.

Dentist eyes need care and attention. As years go by, the muscles around the eyes lose their tone. Eyesight becomes weak after the muscles around the eyes lose their elasticity and become rigid, thereby reducing the power to focus on different distances. In addition, tension around the eyes affects the brain causing stress and anxiety.

Poor lighting, concentration on a small object on a short distance, and mental stress are playing big role in loosing healthy vision. What can a dentist do without great sharp vision at work? Not much, and the sad thing is that in daily life it can become frustrating.

Here are some tips that you can try at the office today that may save your eyesight tomorrow.

Eyesight is dramatically improved when the muscles of the eyes are relaxed. There is a deep correlation between the eyes and the mind. It is said that vision occupies 40% of the brain's capacity. Therefore, when we close our eyes, relaxation is induced in the brain. Eye health corresponds to the level of relaxation it experiences.

## Eye on yoga

Yoga plays a significant role in promoting eye health. A yoga routine replete with asanas, pranayama and meditation helps in achieving peace and tranquility. Yogic eye exercises strengthen the muscles of the eyes and thus help in curing many ailments of the eyes. Certain eye exercises are known to completely rectify eye problems. With yoga, people begin treating their eyes with care, which reflects in good eye health.

The renowned late William H. Bates,<sup>7</sup> an ophthalmologist, claimed that vision could be improved with eye exercises like palming and eyeball rotations. So, eye exercises are important to any individual and should be incorporated into the regular yoga routine. These exercises can be performed at any time of the day.

Before beginning the eye exercise, sit up tall at your desk, with your forearms on the desk.

## Palming

1. To do this pose, sit at your desk with elbows supported and close your eyes.
2. All the body parts from the toes to the head should be in a relaxed state.
3. In this relaxed posture, total calmness, and peace is felt when the whole body and mind have taken complete rest.
4. Warm up your palms by rubbing them tightly, to bring positive warm energy up to awakening in between your palms.
5. Breathe easily; try not to force your breath at any point.
6. Gently cover your eyes with palms and imagine complete darkness. Let your muscles and nerves rest, letting go from any tension from your eyes, relax for a couple of minutes during your work day.



**Palming Relaxes More Than Your Eyes**

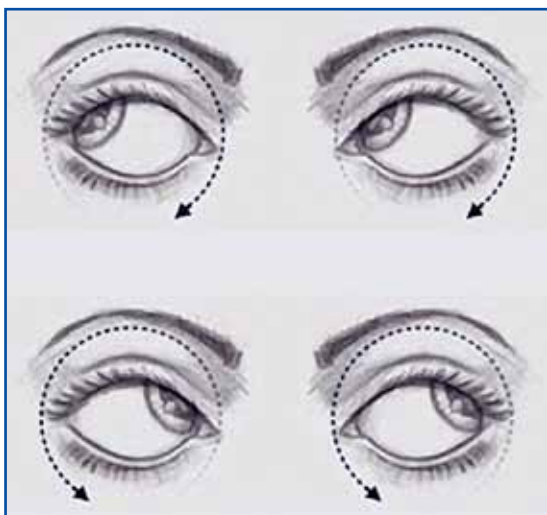
You may find that palming relaxes more than your eyes. Notice if your shoulders, neck, and other tight spots start to let go while you palm. This would be no surprise to Dr. Bates. He observed that eyestrain can go hand in hand with rigidity all through the body. Many yoga teachers also note this connection of eyestrain with other body tensions.

You don't need to compete with the man who palmed 20 hours in one sitting. Palming just a few minutes in the morning, at night, or while at work can be very restful. Many people report clearer vision and a reduction of symptoms such as headaches and dry eyes with regular palming.

These days it is often associated with doing eye exercises. This is not what Dr. Bates taught. He recommended not eye exercises but the use of relaxed natural vision habits all day long.

**Eyeball Rotation**

1. Sit up tall at the desk, with your forearms on the table.
2. Close your eyes for a moment and take couple of natural, deep breaths.
3. Gently open up your eyes and roll the eyeball in a slow circular motion for 10 times in one direction and then the other. You should be able to see your eyebrows, corners of the eye and cheeks (can be done with your eyes closed).
4. Than close your eyes and take couple of breaths.



**Chronic Back Pain**

Around 80% of dentists suffer from back pain during their career and of those who retire prematurely, 30% do so because of persistent back pain.<sup>8</sup>

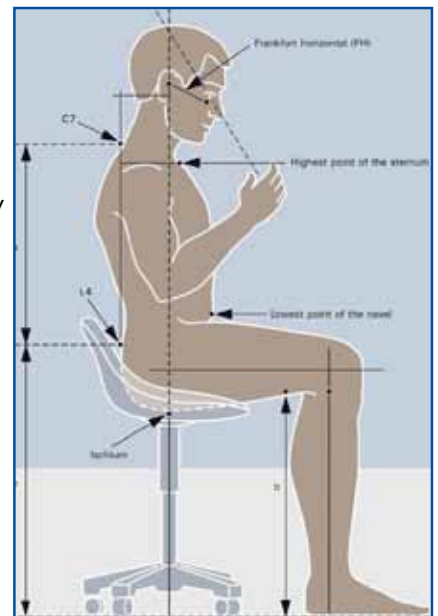
Chronic back pain management can have physical and emotional benefits. Chronic pain's emotional effects include depression, anger, anxiety, and fear of re-injury, which may hinder the ability to return to work or once enjoyable activities.



The emotional toll of chronic pain also can make pain worse. Anxiety, stress, depression, anger, and fatigue interact in complex ways with chronic pain and may decrease the body's production of natural painkillers; moreover, such negative feelings may increase the level of substances that amplify sensations of pain, causing a vicious cycle of pain.

Allow yourself to twist and bend forward every 2 hours. This will bring more blood and fluids into your stiff muscles and mobilize the spine it self.

Back pain is one particularly crucial problem that is in a dentist's best interest to avoid. A good seating position and correct posture is vital for the efficient practice of dentistry and to avoid chronic back pain. In order to do this, it is important to begin learning the correct posture to use while treating. Recent study has however concluded that body pain is prevalent even among dental students.<sup>9</sup>



It has been found that the constant replication of certain movements, such as the many movements that a dentist will perform whilst treating patients in general practice, can contribute to chronic body pain and bad posture.

Head posture should be 0-20 degrees, forearms parallel to the floor or angles upward 0-10 degrees and reach 0-25 degrees, hip angle 105 – 125 degrees, feet flat on the floor and spread apart slightly, back supported by the stool.

A bad posture equals bad health. Shoulder, back pain, reduced lung function and capacity 30% with head leaning forward, gastrointestinal pains, vital organ compression and weakening of abdominal muscles.

Try these easy steps while you are on a break or in between changing shifts.

### Spinal Twist

1. Sit up tall, slide to the edge of the chair slightly, feet right under your knees, thighs parallel to the floor (adjust your stool upwards or downwards).
2. Cross left leg over your right.
3. Cross right arm over your left knee & hold on onto the back of your stool/chair with your left arm.
4. Twist to your left side, helping the rotation with your arms. Gently rotate to the maximum to your left side and slightly turn your head over the left shoulder.
5. Take 5-10 deep and easy breaths, with every inhalation lifting up through your spine, with every exhalation relaxing the back muscles.



Do not perform if you have severe disc case. Do not perform if not advisable by your physician.

### Cat Cow Spinal Stretch

1. Stand on your hands and knees, each arm directly under the shoulder, each knee directly under your hip.
2. Flex your feet by curling toes under.
3. On inhalation drop the spine down, rotating shoulders back, pointing head and tailbone upwards.
4. On exhalation round your spine by arching upwards, squeeze your belly button in and press into the floor firmly.
5. Repeat slowly up to 10 times.



### Forward Bend Stretch

1. Sit down on the floor or a chair with both legs together, straight knees and feet flexed.
2. With straight spine, reach



- down your legs as far as you can go and stop at the level where you feel nice and relaxing stretch in your hamstrings and back.
3. Take up to 5-10 relaxing breath and come back up to seating straight.
4. Repeat for several times.

### Tension Neck Syndrome

Consequently it is unsurprising that more than 70% of dentists suffer from neck ache as a direct result of their jobs, often leading to conditions such as TNS (tension neck syndrome, a major cause of headaches and arm and shoulder pain) and cervical disc degeneration or spondylosis.<sup>10</sup>

Unnatural and static positions of the arms with raised elbows and shoulders, as well as the need for excessive force increase the static muscular load. Mental strain such as monotonous work conditions, need for concentration and much responsibility, together with poor illumination and noise, were characteristic of most of the occupations.

Both the psychological and, partially, physiological constitution of the worker may contribute to the development of the syndrome, External work factors, such as static loading of the shoulders and arms, and repetitive, high speed motions in connection with mental stress can lead to muscle in-coordination and spasm. These investigations also promise, however, that by work design and exercise at work the morbidity of this syndrome can be decreased.<sup>11</sup>

#### Common Causes for Neck Tension Syndrome:

- Sitting unsupported and leaning forward in chair for prolonged periods
- Anxiety, stress, and fear
- Insufficient back support from chair
- Working with your client with your elbows and forearms unsupported can create neck muscle
- Fatigue
- Repetitive head tilting and bending over the patient

#### Common Solutions for Neck Tension Syndrome:

Take regular breaks every 30-40 minutes and stretch neck muscles.

### Neck Rolls

1. Sit up straight at the end of the chair.
2. Place both palms onto your lap and relax your arms.
3. Gently drop your head forward exhaling.
4. On inhalation lift your chin up towards right shoulder.
5. On exhalation roll



- your head back down, chin towards your chest.
6. On inhalation roll over towards your left shoulder
  7. Repeat up to 10 times.

Do not perform if you have had neck surgery or cervical disc herniation.

## Balāsana or Child Pose



1. Sit on the floor on your heels, knees bend and slightly spread apart.
2. Lean over your knees extending through arms and even fingers forward.
3. Place your forehead on the floor (if your head doesn't reach to the floor, fold your arm placing one forearm over the other and rest your head on your arms).
4. Take a moment in this position, with every new exhalation relaxing through the whole back, shoulders and neck.

This restorative pose helps to relax the body and relieve your neck.

Do not perform if you have knee problems, or seat up on a pillow and then bend forward. This will elevate your bottom and change knee angle.

## Bharadvāja's Twist

1. Gently come up from child pose
2. Place your left arm over the right knee.
3. Right arm onto your right foot from the back, and gently turn your torso to the right, twisting around the spine gently.
4. Take couple of easy breaths, lengthening through the spine with every inhalation, letting go of tension with every exhalation.
5. Repeat on the left side.



## Supta Baddha Kōnāsana or Reclining Bound Angle Pose

1. Lie down on your back with your legs bend slightly.
2. Find comfortable position for your head, neck and shoulders.
3. Open up your knees to the sides and join soles of your feet together.



4. Allow all your body to relax, close your eyes and take a moment to connect to your breath.
5. After couple of moments, gently help your knees to come back up, by raising them with your arms.
6. Roll onto your side and gently come up to sitting.

You may place a small pillow under your head if you feel uncomfortable in your neck.

## Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a condition in which there is pressure on the median nerve - the nerve in the wrist that supplies feeling and movement to parts of the hand. Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by an inflammation or collapse of the carpal tunnel that allows nerves to pass through the wrist. It can lead to numbness, tingling, weakness, or muscle damage in the hand and fingers.

The median nerve provides feeling and movement to the "thumb side" of the hand (the palm, thumb, index finger, middle finger, and thumb side of the ring finger).

The area in your wrist where the nerve enters the hand is called the carpal tunnel. This tunnel is normally narrow, so any swelling can pinch the nerve and cause pain, numbness, tingling or weakness. This is called carpal tunnel syndrome.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is common in people who perform repetitive motion of the hand & wrist using tools (especially hand tools or tools that vibrate), which is very common in dentistry.

The condition occurs most often in people 30 to 60 years old, and is more common in women than men.

### Symptoms:

- Clumsiness of the hand when gripping objects.
- Numbness or tingling in the thumb and next two or three fingers of one or both hands.
- Numbness or tingling of the palm of the hand.
- Pain extending to the elbow.
- Pain in the wrist or hand in one or both hands.
- Problems with fine finger movements (coordination) in one or both hands.
- Weak grip or difficulty carrying bags (a common complaint).
- Weakness in one or both hands.

Symptoms often improve with treatment, but more than 50% of cases eventually require surgery. Surgery is often successful, but full healing can take months.

If the condition is treated properly, there are usually no complications. If untreated, the nerve can be damaged, causing permanent weakness, numbness, and tingling.<sup>12</sup>

Dental health workers reported a high incidence of work related musculoskeletal disorder (WRMD). In dental professionals, hand/wrist complaints and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) are the most common distal upper extremity disorders in comparison with other human service

workers. A study was performed to assess the efficacy of a comprehensive exercise program as an ergonomic educational program for CTS in young dentists;<sup>10</sup>

Eighty six dentists from both genders (41 females and 27 males) with age ranged from 29 to 40 years were selected according to self-administered questionnaire covering personal, symptomatic and functional information. All dentists were suffering from CTS and were classified randomly into two equal groups. The study group received a comprehensive exercise program in the form of active range of motion of the wrist\hand joints, stretching of the wrist flexors and extensors, tendon glides and strengthening exercises five days per week with ten repetitions for each exercise for six weeks. The control group did not receive any treatment program except wearing night splint when symptomatic. Pain intensity, handgrip and pinch strengths, symptom severity as well as functional status for both groups were evaluated before starting the study and after six weeks.

The results revealed significant improvement in both groups regarding pain and functional scores. The improvement is more prominent in the group treated with a comprehensive exercise program in comparison to the non-exercise group. The results of the study group showed additional improvement in handgrip and pinch strengths.

The finding of this study reflects the importance of using comprehensive exercises in reducing the incidence of WRMD, particularly CTS in young dentists.

Because the nerves of the carpal tunnel run through the neck and arms before reaching the wrist, tension in the neck and shoulders can also aggravate carpal tunnel syndrome. Below are five tips for using basic stretches to help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome.

### Stretch Your Wrists and Hands<sup>13</sup>



Incorporating hand, wrist and arm stretches into your everyday life can help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome.

1. Extend one arm out in front of you, palm facing up
  2. With your other hand, guide the fingers of the extended hand down toward the ground until you feel a gentle stretch through the wrist
- Always repeat each stretch on both sides.

Here's another basic stretch for your hands and arms:

1. Inhale to lift both arms out to the side and up over your head.
2. Interlace your fingers.
3. Turn your palms up to the sky and straighten your arms.



As you straighten your arms and reach for the sky, be sure to draw your shoulders down away from your ears.

Mudras, or yogic hand gestures, can also be good hand stretches to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome. My favorite Mudra is Pran Mudra:

1. Extend your index finger and middle finger.
2. Bring the finger pads of your ring and pinkie fingers to touch the finger pad of your thumb. Do this with both hands and then sit quietly and feel the effects of the hand stretch.



Explore other Mudras to see which stretches feel best.

### Stretch Your Neck and Shoulders<sup>14</sup>

Tightness in the neck, chest and shoulders may be a contributing factor to carpal tunnel syndrome, and stretching these areas may help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome.

The arm positions for Garudasana (Eagle Pose) and Gomukasana (Cow-Face Pose) are excellent shoulder openers.

### For Garudasana Arms



1. Wrap one arm under the other, first crossing at the elbows and then again at the wrists.
2. Lift your elbows up and draw your shoulders away from your ears.
3. After several breaths, unwrap and repeat with the other arm underneath.

## For Gomukasana Arms



1. Extend one arm out in front of you with the palm facing up.
2. Bend your elbow and reach your palm to your upper back, pointing your elbow toward the sky.
3. With the other arm, face your palm down
4. Bend your elbow and try to bring the back of your hand to your mid-back.
5. Hook the fingers of both hands. Repeat on the other side. If you struggle with either of these shoulder stretches, use a strap to extend your reach. Be careful not to overstretch or hold your breath.

### Take Regular Stretch Breaks at Work<sup>15</sup>

Most yoga stretches to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome can be done discreetly while seated at your desk, and each stretch only needs to be held 15-30 seconds at a time. Taking regular stretch breaks during the day can help prevent a variety of discomforts in addition to preventing carpal tunnel syndrome.

### Stress

Stressed out by fear and pain patients carry a lot of negative energy which of course affects dentists as well. This stress can have a negative impact on dentist's personal and professional life. Dentists are faced every day with many stressors; as a result, you are subjected to many symptoms of stress that must be identified and managed in the early stages before serious physical and psychological consequences develop.<sup>16</sup>

Dentists are prone to professional burnout, anxiety disorders and clinical depression, owing to the nature of clinical practice and the personality traits common among those who decide to pursue careers in dentistry. Fortunately, breathing techniques and relaxation are the prevention strategies that can help dentists conquer and avoid these disorders.

To enjoy satisfying professional and personal lives, dentists must be aware of the importance of maintaining good physical and mental health. A large part of effective practice management is to understand the implications of stress.

Almost 1,000 American dentists attending the 1982 Association annual meeting completed a self-administered questionnaire on sources of stress in dental practice. Most respondents identified dentistry as more stressful than other occupations.<sup>17</sup> However, most believed that other dentists were under more stress than themselves. Dentists use a variety of ways to cope with their stress. The stressors particularly noted include falling behind schedule, striving for technical perfection, causing pain or anxiety in patients, cancelled or late appointments, and lack of cooperation from patients in the dental chair. However, all of the 25 listed during the study stressors were endorsed by at least some dentists. Among the stressors lowest in the composite ratings included: isolation from fellow practitioners, competition, monotony, lack of acceptance by patients of the preferred treatment plan, and lack of appreciation. An exploratory factor analysis leads us to hypothesize six sources in dentists' stress: problems of patients' compliance, pain and anxiety; interpersonal relations; the physical strain of work; economic pressures, and the strain of perfectionism and seeking ideal results. As the well-being of the dentist and that of the staff and patients are dependent on successful management of occupational strains, this topic deserves more empirical study than it has so far received. We strongly suggest more studies dealing with stresses that occur daily in the immediate environment of office, waiting room, and operator.<sup>17</sup>

Stress management through Meditation and Yogic breath are very effective remedies against stress. These techniques are being used for cancer patients in the hospitals and for people with severe depression and anxiety. These techniques do not require any special knowledge or background... anyone can do it.

Breathing is a physical exercise, which can be improved with practise and afterwards done mindfully. By moving your abdominal muscles, diaphragm, lung capacity increases with proper practise, bringing more oxygen into the body.

We can affect our state of the mind through breath, same way as our mind affects our breath.

As we get stressed out, angry, or scared, our breath becomes short, shallow, fast an uneasy which affects our heart rate and blood pressure, leading to health complications if being affected by stress for a long period of time.

As we are calm and relaxed, sleeping or awake, or we are having a walk by the side of the river or listening to

beautiful piano music, our breath is equal, deep and relaxed. And the state of our mind is calm and relaxed.

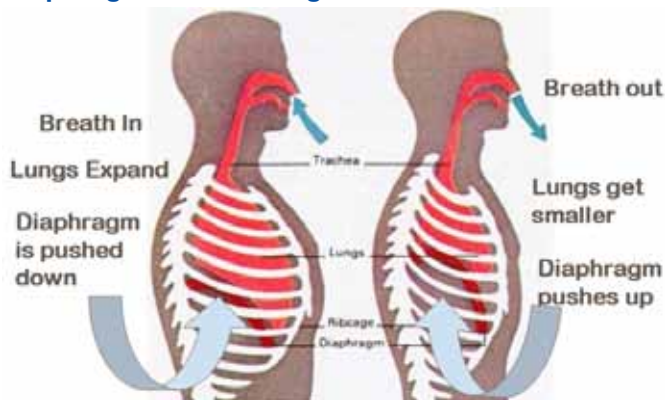
### Try this Simple Technique of Pranayama

1. Seat up tall, with your spine being straight and back supported.
2. Rest your arms on your lap, shoulders relaxed and close your eyes gently.
3. Bring your attention to your breath, notice if you breathe shallow or fast.
4. Try to clear up your mind and for a moment be present with your natural breath.
5. On inhalation count 1,2,3,4 hold your breath for a second, and on exhalation count 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Repeat up to 10 rounds.
6. After you reached last round take a moment in silence to just observe the state of your mind and your breath after this exercise and notice any differences, if your mind became a bit calmer, if your breath became deeper and less anxious.

This type of breath brings concentration to the mind. Helps to lower blood pressure and reduce stress.

A handful of scientists (and a boatload of yogis) have studied this 1-to-2 ratio breathing pattern (here we did 4 to 8... same ratio), and what they've discovered is that by simply extending exhalations, it stimulates vagus nerve and immediately has a calming effect on the body.

### Diaphragmatic Breathing



1. Sit up tall or lie down on your back, using folded blankets to support the spine and head if necessary, chin should be slightly elevated.
2. Place your left palm on your belly above the navel and your right on your chest closer to the heart.
3. Inhale through your nose, expanding the belly in all directions, and exhale contracting the lower abdomen push the air out.



4. Try not to move your chest and the palm on your chest, let the air go deep down through your chest into the abdomen.
5. Take up to 10-20 relaxed breaths and then place your hands on the side of the rib cage. Inhale, lifting the lower belly noticing the air expanding the ribs, exhale and feel rib cage contracts in.
6. Repeat for a few breaths.

Practicing Diaphragmatic Breathing reduces stress and brings greater mindfulness to the body.

Diaphragmatic breath stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which works in the opposite way to the sympathetic nervous system. Parasympathetic nervous system slows your cardiovascular system and relaxes your muscles.

Diaphragmatic breathing relaxes the muscles, massages the internal organs, and allows more oxygen to flow through your body.

Try out simple relaxation technique to calm your body & mind after a busy exhausting working day before you fall asleep.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation



This technique is often most useful when you tape the instructions beforehand. You can tape these instructions, reading them slowly and leaving a short pause after each one.

1. Lie on your back, close your eyes.
2. Feel your feet. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and sink into the bed. Start with your toes and progress to your ankles.
3. Feel your knees. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the bed.
4. Feel you upper legs and thighs. Feel their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the bed.
5. Feel your abdomen and chest. Sense your breathing. Consciously will them to relax.
6. Deepen your breathing slightly and feel your abdomen and chest sink into the bed.
7. Feel your buttocks. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the bed.
8. Feel your hands. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the bed.
9. Feel your upper arms. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the bed.
10. Feel your shoulders. Sense their weight. Consciously



- relax them and feel them sink into the bed.
11. Feel your neck. Sense its weight. Consciously relax it and feel it sink into the bed.
  12. Feel your head and skull. Sense its weight. Consciously relax it and feel it sink into the bed.
  13. Feel your mouth and jaw. Consciously relax them. Pay particular attention to your jaw muscles and unclench them if you need to. Feel your mouth and jaw relax and sink into the bed.
  14. Feel your eyes. Sense if there is tension in your eyes. Sense if you are forcibly closing your eyelids. Consciously relax your eyelids and feel the tension slide off the eyes.
  15. Feel your face and cheeks. Consciously relax them and feel the tension slide off into the bed.

Mentally scan your body. If you find any place that is still tense, then consciously relax that place and let it sink through the bed into the floor. Let go from any physical or mental tension and accept who you are and where you stand today.

Giving yourself half an hour a day with stretches and relaxation will definitely improve your mental and physical state.

Namaste.

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