

## INTRO TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your first line of defense is to choose a healthy lifestyle. Following general good-health guidelines is the single best step you can take toward naturally keeping your immune system strong and healthy. Every part of your body, including your immune system, functions better when protected from environmental assaults and bolstered by healthy-living strategies.



Modern medicine has come to appreciate the closely linked relationship of mind and body. For many of us, deep breathing seems unnatural. There are several reasons for this. For one, body image has a negative impact on respiration in our culture. A flat stomach is considered attractive, so women (and men) tend to hold in their stomach muscles. This interferes with deep breathing and gradually makes shallow "chest breathing" seem normal, which increases tension and anxiety.

Shallow breathing limits the diaphragm's range of motion. The lowest part of the lungs doesn't get a full share of oxygenated air. That can make you feel short of breath and anxious. Deep abdominal breathing encourages full oxygen exchange — that is, the beneficial trade of incoming oxygen for outgoing carbon dioxide. Not surprisingly, it can slow the heartbeat and lower or stabilize blood pressure.

*"How to Boost Your Immune System." Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard University, Sept. 2014, [www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-to-boost-your-immune-system](http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-to-boost-your-immune-system).*

Researchers in Australia were far more prepared for a pandemic than many other countries including the US.

*"When COVID-19 emerged, we already had ethics and protocols in place so we could rapidly start looking at the virus and immune system in great detail," Dr Thevarajan said.*

(<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200317103815.htm>. "Science Daily, 17 Mar. 2020, [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200317103815.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200317103815.htm).)

Even though they have a high infection rate they also have a higher recovery rate. They attribute this to a stronger immune response rate. The stronger your immune system the more likely you will survive the virus and maybe even have a lighter case.

How do you get a stronger immune system? Go to the next lesson to find out.

## Welcome to 5 Minutes to Boost Your Immune System

- You don't need any special equipment
- You don't have to go some place
- You don't need anything but yourself



All you need is 5 minutes and the willingness to perform self care

You might ask: What is self care?

I thought a lot about the definition of self-care, I googled and searched the internet, I asked friends and family, but I couldn't put it any better than Tony Robbins when he wrote:

The concept of self-care is one we hear about more and more these days, but many people are confused by what it actually means. What is self care? And what are some self-care activities that you can use to ensure you are taking care of your mind, body and soul?



Think about the safety speech you hear every time you're on a plane. If you're traveling with other people who might need your help in case of an emergency, the flight attendants tell you to be sure to secure your own oxygen mask before tending to those in your care. Why? Because if you try to help others without ensuring your own safety first, you might pass out.

The same logic can be applied to your everyday life. Have you invested in taking care of yourself? Many people shy away from the term "self-care" because they assume the notion is founded on ideas of selfishness or a lack of caring about others. On the contrary, self care is essential to our lives. When you're able to care for yourself physically, emotionally and mentally, you become better able to pursue your goals and enrich the lives of the people around you.

*Robbins, Tony. "HOW UTILIZING SELF-CARE HELPS YOU CARE FOR OTHERS." Tony Robbins, Robbins Research International, Inc, [www.tonyrobbins.com/mental-health/self-care-tips](http://www.tonyrobbins.com/mental-health/self-care-tips). Accessed 6 Apr. 2020.*

Are your ready to boost your immune system? Got to the next lesson...

## BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

How do you get a stronger immune system?



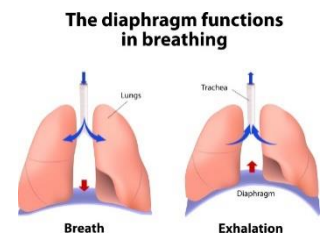
Eating well, exercising, and sleeping at least 8 hours every night, improves the power of the immune system. But did you know that the simple act of breathing properly is a terrific way of strengthening the immune defenses?

How does breathing strengthen your immune system?

Good question! Purposeful breathing strengthens the diaphragm, decreases the work of breathing by slowing your breathing rate, decreases oxygen demand and allows you to use less effort and energy to breathe.

What does the diaphragm do?

The diaphragm is a muscle shaped like an upside-down bowl at the bottom of your rib cage. It is the most important muscle used for breathing. Just like any other muscle, it needs to be exercised. When you inhale deeply, the diaphragm moves downward and allows your lungs to fill completely. When exhale slowly, the diaphragm moves upward to remove all stale air that gets trapped in the bottom of your lungs due to shallow breathing. How often do you take breaths this deep?



Controlled breathing has a positive effect on the body by lowering cortisol levels (your stress response), improving blood flow and lowering your blood pressure.

*Ferris, Emma. "How Deep Breathing Techniques Can Boost Your Immune System." The Breath Effect, 26 Dec. 2018, [www.thebreatheffect.com/immune-system-breathing-techniques](http://www.thebreatheffect.com/immune-system-breathing-techniques).*

The Covid19 virus attacks the lungs, so you can see how important it is to keep your lungs and diaphragm as strong as possible. In this new world of ours the most important muscle to exercise is the diaphragm.

Go to the next lesson to learn how:

## Breathing Techniques

Yogic breathing is a mindful, controlled, extended process of exhalation and inhalation. The autonomic nervous system is the part of your nervous system responsible for control of your bodily functions not consciously directed, such as the heartbeat and digestive processes, as well as your breath. Of these, the breath is the only thing you can consciously control, and by doing so, you can directly impact your body's physiology and your immune system.

The diaphragm is a muscle and like any muscle it can get tight and stiff. This happens sometimes when you are stressed. It is shaped like a dome and resides up under your ribcage. When you use your abdominal muscle on an inhale it flattens the diaphragm to allow the lungs to fill completely and when you exhale it rises to push the stale air out of the lungs.

### Diaphragmatic Breathing (Belly Breathing)

Benefits:

1. Increases supply of oxygen and nutrients to cells throughout your body
2. Increases the supply of blood and nutrients to muscles, blood and bones
3. Lowers your heart rate
4. Helps lower your blood pressure

Instructions:

- Place your left hand on your belly and your right hand on your chest
- Inhale through your nose and imagine blowing up a balloon in your belly. You should feel your belly rise and as you continue to inhale you will feel your chest expand.
- On the exhale, using your abdominal muscles, press your navel towards your spine. Your diaphragm moves up and helps press the air out of your lungs.
- Continue inhaling and exhaling through your nose
- Start to lengthen your breath on the inhale and the exhale
- As you become use to breathing in this way, make your exhale longer than your inhale. A long exhale activates your parasympathetic nervous system telling your body to relax.



You can do this anywhere, lying down or sitting or even standing to strengthen your immune system.

## Alternate Nostril Breathing (Nadi Shodhana Pranayama)

Alternate Nostril Breath is a simple and powerful technique that settles your mind, body and emotions. If you only have 5 minutes for a breathing technique, pick this one first. It has the most power to boost your immune system.



Benefits:

1. Improves your respiratory health
2. Rejuvenates your nervous system
3. Improves your ability to focus your mind

Instructions:

- Practice in a seated position
- Your spine is straight
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths through your nose
- Relax your left hand and bring your right hand in front of your face
- Place your pointer finger and middle finger between your eyebrows
- Close your right nostril with your thumb and slowly inhale through your left nostril
- Close your left nostril with your ring finger and hold your breath for a brief pause
- Release your thumb and exhale slowly through your right nostril
- Pause and slowly inhale through your right nostril and hold both nostrils closed with your thumb and ring finger, pause briefly
- Repeat 5-10 cycles, allowing your mind to follow your inhales and exhales.

## Ocean Breath

Ocean Breath (Ujjayi Pranayama) has a balancing influence on your entire cardiorespiratory system

Benefits:

1. Strengthens your immune system
2. Improves sleep
3. Clears phlegm
4. Stimulates and balances your thyroid
5. Regulates heating of your body

Instructions:

- Seal your lips
- Start to inhale and exhale through your nose
- Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth
- Take an inhalation through your nose that is slightly deeper than normal
- Exhale slowly through your nose while constricting the muscles in the back of your throat, you will hear a sound like the ocean waves.



Unlike the other breathing techniques discussed, you can use this breath during any yoga practice and is a good way to concentrate your mind and stay present when you are practicing.

### Bee Breath



Bee Breath (Bhramari Pranayama) is an instant way to relieve tension, anger and anxiety. It is an amazingly effective breathing technique for people suffering from hypertension as it calms down your agitated mind.

#### Benefits:

1. Gives relief if you are feeling hot or have a slight headache
2. Relief from tension, anger, and anxiety
3. Helps mitigate migraines
4. Improves concentration and memory

#### Instructions:

- Sit in any comfortable seated position with your hands resting on your knees
- Close your eyes, relax your whole body
- Lips should remain gently closed with your teeth slightly separated throughout your practice
- Raise your arms sideways and bend your elbows, close your ear lids gently with your thumbs
- Place your index finger just above your eyebrow
- Close your eyes
- Use your middle finger to lightly cover your eyes
- Place your ring fingers next to your nose and apply a little pressure, but do not close your nostrils
- Inhale through your nose and exhale through your nose slowly and controlled while making a deep, steady humming sound like that of the bee
- Do 5-10 rounds in the beginning and increase to 15 over time.

For a simpler version you can just cover yours ears with your thumbs and close your eyes.

Any of these techniques will work to instantly calm you in 5 minutes or less. They can be done anywhere, or you might want to find a quiet place to practice.

For more information on Yoga Therapy for Self Care go to the next lesson...

**REMEMBER WHAT IS IMPORTANT!!**

It's important to note that Yoga Therapy is a self-care program. Take responsibility for your own health by creating a breathing practice that is easy for you to do on a daily basis. Pick a few of the techniques that work with your body and your lifestyle and commit to doing it every day. You can decide at any time to add a technique or delete a technique and make it easy on yourself. Print out the following statement and post it where you will see it every day.

**COMMITMENT STATEMENT FOR SELF CARE**

The human body possesses an enormous, astonishing, and persistent capacity to heal itself.

Today I \_\_\_\_\_, commit to Self-Care to encourage my body to heal and allow me to enjoy my life to the fullest.

I understand that my role is a significant responsibility to myself and will make it a priority. I will actively participate in a practice on a daily basis.

I have read and fully agree to this Letter of Commitment.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have the breathing techniques to boost your immune system, spread it around. When doctors are in training they say, "Learn one, Do one, Teach one!" When you are calm and relaxed you will be more aware of others who need your help.

Anytime is a good time to practice patience, compassion and kindness. From random acts of kindness and compassion for another you see struggling or donating time or money to help others in need, now is the time. It's also going to leave you feeling light, happy and all around good!

**Remember what the Dali Lama says:**

*"When we feel love and kindness toward others, it not only makes others feel loved and cared for, but it helps us also to develop inner happiness and peace." – Dalai Lama*

Like me on Facebook at: [Yoga Therapy for Self Care](#) or

Visit me at [www.A-Path-To-Balance.Com](http://www.A-Path-To-Balance.Com) for a FREE consultation on how I can help you with your self care.