

Breath of Life

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The global majority of us are sitting in our homes, anticipating the end of Covid-19 and its wake. I want to share with you an experience Dr. Christopher had that I feel is very relevant to us and can provide improvement to our lives.

In his early 30's, Dr. Christopher was having consumption problems by inhaling dry dust from the saw mill of a cabinet shop. His breathing was so poor, he said it hurt to breathe and could get no more than maybe $\frac{3}{4}$ inch chest expansion. He didn't know what to do about it and soon had a dream. In the dream, an old woman with very ugly teeth told him, "You need to breathe deep, deep, deep. You'll keep alive if you breathe deep." He knew the dream was for him and tried for about 10 days, breathing any way he could. A few days later, he ran into an old friend he had not seen in some time. His friend said he had been thinking of him and wanted to give him a little booklet about breathing. The book taught him to stop breathing from his mouth and breath with his nose. A short time later he ran across a book called, The Science of Breath by Yogi Ramacharaka. The book taught him the mechanics of the respiratory, circulatory, nervous and other systems and how they are affected by breathing techniques. A short while later he was drafted into the army. Upon examination, a sergeant measured his chest, followed by a major asking if he would consider changing from the army to the submarine crew since he had the chest expansion of 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches! By learning deep breathing techniques, Dr. Christopher's health and chest expansion greatly improved. 1

The following breathing techniques are from The Science of Breath and the "Iceman" Wim Hof. The Science of Breath - The Complete Breath

1. Stand or sit up straight. Breathe through the nostrils, inhale steadily, first filling the lower part of the lungs, which is brought about by the diaphragm putting gentle pressure on the abdominal organs, pushing them forward by filling the lower area with air. Then fill the middle, followed by the higher portions of the lungs, causing the mid and upper chest to lift out and upward.
2. Retain the breath for a few seconds.
3. Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position, and the abdomen comes in, allowing the air to exhale completely.

Speaking of retained breath, Yogi says, "This is a very important exercise which tends to strengthen and develop the respiratory muscles as well as the lungs, and its frequent practice will also tend to expand the chest." He says that occasionally holding the breath is beneficial, "not only to the respiratory organs but to the organs of nutrition, the nervous system and the blood itself." The retained air gathers up and "expels the waste of the lungs just as does a purgative to the bowels".2

Wim Hof teaches breathing techniques and cold water therapies. He instructs breath work to be done in a safe place, not under the water or while driving.

"While sitting in a comfortable place, take 30 quick, deep breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. Then, take a deep **breath** and exhale; hold until you need to **breathe** in. Inhale again, as deep as you can, and hold it for 10 seconds.

Repeat as many times as you like." 3, 4

Wim also advocates deep breathing in the lower part of the lungs and then into the upper chest (like explained above in Science of Breath).

I have started applying the breathing techniques and concepts I have learned. It has been amazing for me experiencing the “science” of breathing and cold water therapy. For a week I have been doing deep breathing and cold showers daily. I feel more energy, peace, and more control of my mind and heart. This practice not only brings about respiratory and circulatory health, but mental sharpness and increased will power. Breathe deep and stay healthy world!

Kelly Pomeroy is a Master Herbalist graduate, Foot Zoner, and Foot Zone Instructor. She believes in continual education and loves to learn about plants, the body, and how to take care of them. Kelly lives in Utah with her four wonderful children.

References

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