

## **Breath is Life**

It is the conscious movement of breath that can achieve a state of relaxed vitality and optimal health is reached and maintained.

You can train your breath as a tool to achieve heightened energy and awareness.

1. **Balloon Breath:** Place one or both hands on belly and then, breathing deeply, feel it rise on the inhalation like a balloon filling with air. On the exhalation, feel the belly lower or contract. This breath can be done sitting up, however, we recommend doing it lying down in (*rest pose*) when first learning it, especially for young children.

If you can get this one down, it will change your life!

2. **Bear Breath:** Inhale through nose for 3-5 counts, hold 1-2 counts, exhale through nose 3-5 counts, hold 1-2 counts and repeat. The hold for 1-2 counts is like a pause or momentary suspension of breathing. This breath should be done as slowly and smoothly as possible. It is calming, nurturing and cleansing.
3. **Bunny Breath:** Have the children twitch their noses as if they are bunnies. Inhale through the nose in 3 quick sniffs, pause, and then, exhale through the nose in a big sigh. This breath relaxes and cleanses. It is helpful for children who are tense and need a release.

It's can also be mildly energizing.

4. **Feeling Breath:** Place both hands on the rib cage. Feel the ribs on the front of the body as well as the back. With each inhale through the nose, feel the rib cage move and expand. On the exhale, feel the rib cage shrink. Pull the belly all the way in on the exhale. Challenge students to inhale and hold the breath for a moment, then try to take in one more sip of air as if sipping through a straw. As students develop space for breath, they will be able to take in many "sips" of air to create more space. This breath helps students to sit up straight and actually feel the breath moving in and out of the body. This breath should be done as slowly and smoothly as possible. It is calming, nurturing and cleansing and connects students to the physicality of breathing.

This gets you into your body quickly.