



HELPING HANDS



Proper Breathing Will Improve Your Health

(excerpts from Selfication Rewire your brain for success, happiness & health)

Without knowing it, improper breathing might be affecting your sleep, mood, digestion, heart, nervous system, muscles, brain and even the development of your teeth and face structure. Proper breathing can yield benefits that can improve the overall health of your body. Learning a few simple techniques for proper breathing can enhance your quality of life. A few of the benefits include: greater energy, improved health, feeling at harmony with your world, decreased anxiety and fear, better relationships and a happier life in general.

Here are some tips to become more aware of your breathing and how to improve your life through better breathing.

What is proper breathing? In short, it means breathing in a way that is physiologically optimal for your body. It's the way you're designed to breathe, only you were never taught how to. Most of us breathe in a way that leaves a lot of room for improvement. Some examples of this are: over-breathing, holding our breath and/or shallow breathing. These breathing patterns are very stressful for the body and lead to a shortage of oxygen and energy. A shortage of oxygen to your organs can lead to significant consequences. The solution to improper breathing is to become highly conscious of the way you breathe and reshape your breathing habits.

Bad breathing habits can give rise to a lot of unexpected negative effects on our health and well-being. The nervous system can become unbalanced. Breath is very important in maintaining a balanced body because each breath has an immediate effect on the nervous system. Dysfunctional breathing habits, like short breaths, or forced breathing, may result in a tense body and increased levels of stress. When you are breathing improperly, airways get tighter. Tighter airways make it harder for the air to make its way to and from the lungs. To compensate, you have to work harder and breathe faster to get the same work done. This leads to blood vessels constricting, which can lead to higher blood pressure. Higher blood pressure makes the heart work harder.

Bad breathing lessens the body's ability to deliver oxygen to the cells. The cells get stressed and begin to focus on survival instead of development. Many processes in the body are dependent upon oxygen.

Some of the organs affected include:

- The brain – the brain uses 20% of the oxygen we consume. When there's a shortage of oxygen, the brain will work slower. The brain regulates a lot of other functions and can slow any of these functions when it senses a lack of resources.

- The heart is constantly active and beats about 100,000 times a day. The heart is a major consumer of oxygen. A shortage in oxygen means the heart can't pump out blood as effectively. This leads to poor circulation and the accompanying consequences.

- The muscles – oxygen shortage has a negative effect on stamina. Muscles can stiffen, increase tension and fatigue faster.

The nervous system - the nervous system consumes oxygen and glucose for fuel. The more challenging the task, the more fuel nerves consume. Cells use oxygen to extract energy from glucose and fats and to produce energy. When oxygen is not available, this process fails and leads to an overall lack of energy, lethargy and dysfunction throughout the body.



Prescription Drugs

Recreational use of prescription drugs is a serious problem. Many people believe prescription drugs are safe because they were prescribed by a doctor. Taking them for non-medical use to “self-medicate” or get high can be just as dangerous and addictive as taking illegal street drugs.

There are very serious health risks in taking prescription drugs improperly. This is why they must be taken only under the care of a doctor. Prescription drug use must be closely monitored to avoid addiction or other problems. Many pills look the same. It is extremely dangerous to take any pill that was not prescribed for you. Additionally - people have different reactions to drugs due to the differences in each person’s body chemistry. A drug that was okay for one person could be very risky, even fatal, for someone else.

Prescription drugs are only safe for the individuals who were given the prescription and *no one else*. Due to the potential for abuse and addiction, many prescription drugs have been designated by the US Drug Enforcement Administration in the same category as opium or cocaine. These include Ritalin and Dexedrine (stimulants), and the painkillers OxyContin, Demerol and Roxanol.

Abuse of prescription drugs can be even riskier than the abuse of illegally manufactured drugs. The high potency of some of the synthetic (man-made) drugs available as prescription drugs creates a high overdose risk. This is particularly true of OxyContin and similar painkillers, where overdose deaths have more than doubled over a five-year period. Taking the medication as prescribed is critical. Taking more than the prescribed amount can lead to addiction and the need for more of the drug as your body develops a “tolerance” for the drug.



IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinators. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you are experiencing.

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TYPES OF ABUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription drugs that are taken for recreational use include the following major categories:

1. Depressants: Often referred to as central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) depressants, these drugs slow brain function. They include sedatives (used to make a person calm and drowsy) and tranquilizers (intended to reduce tension or anxiety).
2. Opioids and morphine derivatives: Generally referred to as painkillers, these drugs contain opium or opium-like substances and are used to relieve pain.
3. Stimulants: A class of drugs intended to increase energy and alertness but which also increase blood pressure, heart rate and breathing.
4. Antidepressants: Psychiatric drugs that are designed to help with symptoms of depression.

