The Air Up There

No one can live for more than a few minutes without breathing, but many people are unaware of the importance of breathing properly. Bad breathing habits have caused most of us to use only a fraction of our potential respiratory capacity.

Proper breathing demands a three-part movement. First the diaphragm causes the abdomen to expand, filling the lower lungs. Secondly, the intercostals expand the rib-cage to allow air to fill in the middle lungs. And third, the chest lifts to bring air into the top portion of the lungs.

Most people breathe only using the top part of the lungs, and forget to bring the air all the way down into the abdominals. This doesn't allow for full gas exchange in the system, and find ourselves feeling less energized throughout the day.

This is why we get the feeling of being fully "awakened" after a good cardiovascular workout. It is because we have been forced to take deeper breathes than we normally do through out the day.

The physical benefits of proper breathing include; allowing the body to rid itself of noxious gaseous by-products of metabolism (especially carbon dioxide); provides sufficient oxygen for the correct and efficient functioning of every cell in the body.

So if you are feeling less energy during the day, take 3 minutes to follow this breathing exercise:

- -Inhale through the nose, allowing the air to expand the lower abdominal area first;
- As you inhale, feel the air expanding into the middle of the chest, and rising up to the upper chest area.
- As you exhale, exhale from upper chest down to lower abdominals, squeezing out all the air through your nose once more. Repeat as needed.

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