



Video Transcript

Learn 3D Breath With Anatomy Knowledge

Hi, this is Melissa, and I wanted to lead you through what we call in the movement world three -dimensional breathing. I'm someone personally who has suffered with anxiety and depression that have resulted in panic attacks and they know that I'm not alone. When you have a more holistic understanding of what actually happens in your body, when you're breathing, you have an anatomical reality that centers you and grounds you when your emotional self or your mental self feel sometimes chaotic, out of control, challenging, or just not doing what it needs to be in your service to you. So one way that I have learned to manage a lot of my anxiety and some severe panic attacks has been to have a more complete understanding of the anatomical reality that actually happens within me so that I can have that knowledge to assist myself as a bridge back to a functional breath, to a grounded breath, one that has often cut panic attacks short or has helped me to completely avoid them when I have felt them begin. So let's start together by breathing. It doesn't matter how you're breathing right now. I don't want you to breathe with me with any kind of agenda other than to simply feel. And it's okay. We're here to gather information. So simply allow yourself to be and feel what's happening right now. Three breaths together, starting now. It feels so good to present this information to you while there's wind around me. You can see it in my hair. I can see the rustling of trees around me in the wind and it's like a reminder from nature that breath is the foundation of our well-being. How did those breaths go for you just now? Remember, we're only gathering data. It's very useful as we move forward together to suspend as much judgment around your experience as possible. We are looking to simply observe. So I'm going to ask you to feel into your physical body.

Notice how I'm in a chair. Most of us are comfortable when seated on a seat. And I want you to sit in any way that feels most comfortable for you. I don't want your back to be a distraction or your hips. I want you to be at ease in your body so you can focus on your breathing. So feel free in this moment to readjust your posture, to remember the intention of why we're here. We are here to learn about the anatomy of breathing. Sit in any way that feels good. You can shift your weight. And then put the majority of your sensing wherever you feel your bottom. Do you feel your butt on your chair? It's great. If you have your feet on the floor, tune into the feeling of your feet on the floor. Wonderful. Let's breathe together again, but we're going to elongate this time for five breaths. Starting now.

If

that was more than three breaths or five breaths. If it was less, don't stress it. We're just here to breathe. You're doing it right. Now, you might notice yourself feeling possibly a little more anxious as we approach paying attention to our breathing, or you might feel yourself get really relaxed or even a little tired. All of that is normal. You might see that I close my eyes when I feel inwards. If that works for you, great. If that brings your internal sensing a little too immediate to your perspective, if that feels too confronting, open your eyes. Let's take a little practice break. I want you to look around your room,

Take in wherever you're sitting some information about your external environment. And notice that if you need help stabilizing yourself in this experience, you can always open your eyes and do just that. This works best when you take the practice at your own pace. Good job. The first thing I want you to become very aware of is that beyond the inhale and exhale of your breath cycle, there's a pause after that inhale. There's also a pause after that exhale. Let's take a couple of moments to feel the pauses in between the inhale and exhale phases.

Can you begin to gently lengthen the space of that pause?

I'm not getting bored by this. Don't worry. What you're seeing as I expand and deepen the space of those pauses, I'm triggering what is often referred to as a parasympathetic response, meaning that I'm taking the sympathetic response in my body down. The sympathetic response is one driven by excitatory stimulus, and you might think of it as your fight or flight system. It's a little more nuanced than that, but I'm going to keep it very simple right now. The yawn I just demonstrated is a signal that I'm starting to move into another state, the parasympathetic state. This is the aspect of your nervous system that we associate with rest and digest. So I'm starting to lack.

A yawn can often be interpreted as a release of stress. So if you're going to yawn, I don't want you to try to stifle it as to how big mind was. I recognize those moments as a time to release. It's not always going to be appropriate given the social context of wherever you are to yawn so openly, but between the two of us, you can. Think of it as a gift. Let go, release. So as we're playing with

those phases of the exhale, the pause, excuse me, after the exhale, and the pause after the inhale, you start to slow your breathing down in general. That's great. It's going to allow you to feel more. And this is a sensing practice, okay? So let's do that one more time together just for a couple of moments, feeling those pauses, and you're going to practice deepening the space of those pauses. And you might find that you like the pause after the inhale more, or like me, you like the pause after the exhale more. It's important to note that, just so you see where you are, all right? Let's do it one more time together. Excellent.

That's enough. That's already enough to start changing how you breathe, to interrupt a stressful pattern of breath, to switch the nervous system into a different state, and to even And on a personal level, your relative sense of time and space.

I already feel like I've, just in doing this what you, have harnessed the magical ability to slow time down and to create spaciousness not just outside of myself but within myself. So let's start going within. We know that the air that you allow in through your nostrils and your mouth only ever goes into your lungs.

But your lungs are big. And your lungs are actually bigger behind you than they are in front of you. I want you to feel into that. And by the way,

Highly encourage you to listen to this again, to practice this with me again, and even look up images of lungs. You don't have to look at anything disturbing like a cadaver dissection. There's plenty of images on the internet or anatomy books that are drawn out in an animation style. So you can comfortably see the anatomy that I am discussing with you now. Feel for your lungs.

Let's just start there. Feel for your lungs as you're breathing.

Can you outline them in your mind? Can you feel the right lung?

Can you feel the left lung?

And if you're coming to this breathing practice with a history of breathing difficulties, or maybe your lung structure is different than what is considered statistically normal, then just go with what you have. If you're watching this, you're breathing well enough. Simply feel.

And we're going to move into what is often referred to as a belly breath. Now, we've already discussed that the air that you allow in never moves beyond your lungs. But if you were to put your hands on your belly and soften the abdominal wall.

You might feel that that helps you to release a little tension. And I find this part of the practice easiest when I'm touching myself. My belly often needs a pillow or the support of my own hands to feel relaxed enough and safe enough to let go.

This is a very intimate and tender area of your body. Do what it needs you to do to release. And if you're touching yourself and that feels a little uncomfortable or there's some hesitancy there, I want you to try to at least touch your body with gratitude.

Let's just be happy that we have bellies to begin with.

Notice how this shifts your breathing.

How does touching your belly and relaxing the abdominal wall shift your breath?

When we allow the abdominal wall to soften, we often create more space. And by the way, there is no one right way to breathe. There are many, many ways to breathe. The efficacy of your breath strategy depends on the context of your activity. And in this context together, we're trying to relax. And we're trying to create space. So allowing that abdominal wall to soften is going to be very helpful right now.

You're doing great.

Go back to your lungs. And if you want to put a hand on your chest so you can feel the rise of your sternum and a hand on your belly, can you sense for movement underneath these two hands?

And I'm not going to get into dictating a rhythm or which hands should move first right now it's just about feeling the hands and feeling for any movement underneath them

Hmm.

That's wonderful.

Let's talk about the space between the hands right now. There's a whole lot of stuff going on there. What I mean by that is underneath your lungs, you have a diaphragm. And again, I encourage you to look up images of your diaphragm. You might be surprised at what you find. Your diaphragm is a very large sheath of muscle. Think of it as like a mushroom cap and it is three-dimensional within you and it lines the entire circumference of the internal space of your ribcage. That's phenomenal. This mushroom cap within you has an undulating aspect or anatomically what we refer to as the central tendon of your diaphragm pushes down. Okay, so let me repeat that.

As you're inhaling, you're probably going to feel your lungs expand, your rib cage is going to open, and you can sense for the movement of the diaphragm flaring as that central aspect of it pushes down. By the way, the kinetic chain of those events isn't always, as I've described. And that's a much more nuanced anatomical conversation. So I'm just placing your focus on your inhale, your rib cage expanding, and your diaphragm flaring.

Let's breathe into that for a moment.

How's it going? If that feels complicated to you, that's fair.

It is.

And if it feels like there's a little bit of a void or a block in your ability to sense that, don't worry about it. This happens with practice. Think of it as a form of meditation. I remember the intention and providing you with information, the beauty of the anatomical and physiological underpinnings of your experience with breaths so that the next time you feel like you can't breathe or you're getting anxious or panicky or your breath is being stifled for something that isn't acutely medically related.

you. It's underneath your collarbones and it's down low by your kidneys.
So it's almost like an internal set of armor protecting those beautiful lungs and your diaphragm.

And when you can remember, oh right,
this is a three -dimensional breath. You can start to cut short the sensory experience that anxiety can bring. Go to your knowledge.

Go to your felt wisdom. That's why we're practicing this together in a more relaxed state so that you have this to call upon when you are not in such a relaxed state. It's important to practice in a place when there isn't anything to stress you out. Let's bring it back to hands on the belly.

Lungs open when you inhale.

Rib cage three -dimensionally expands.

Diaphragm Flares.

Central tendon, which is deep, it's not here. You can't touch it like that. You'd have to go to a specialized massage therapist to get there. But it's enough to know that it's deep within you. And as it's pushing down, it's pushing down on your organs in a way that it was meant to. And so when you soften your abdominal wall, you're more likely to allow those organs, the freedom of movement. Yes, your organs do like a little squishy dance, like a symphony of movement within you. I just burped a little bit. That's normal. That's called organ response. When the breath is able to move so functionally, it also assists digestion.

It gives your organs a very slight massage. So that's why we soften the abdominal wall to allow that to happen right now. And in this context, that is ideal.

Feel on the inhale how the organs push against your abdominal wall.

And if there's resistance to that relaxation, if your abdominal wall is contracted, please gently reminded that it's safe in this moment to release. There's always a mechanism of protection that usually underlies that resistance or difficulty in sensing. So don't be harsh about it. This is the time to be gentle with yourself.

Can you feel your butt on the chair or whatever you're sitting on?

And can you imagine your organs reaching all the way to the soft tissue beneath or between your sitting bones?

And want to clarify, that soft tissue is not underneath your sitting bones, but it can feel that way. And so in between your sitting bones, those pokey bones under your bum, there's soft tissue in between. And that's your pelvic floor. So you can approximate touching and feeling it by feeling the soft tissue underneath you.

And as your organs move down with your inhale? Why? Why do your organs move down? Because of the central tendon pushing down.

Then you can feel almost a weightiness there as your organs push towards your pelvic floor. And if feeling for it in this position doesn't help, the way I'm seated isn't helpful, then feel free, this is your body to touch yourself to put your hands underneath your sitting bones and put your other hand on your abdomen and just to make that connection that

a very full and relaxed inhale will reach often it feels like from the top of your

head. It's okay to feel that. That's not what's happening anatomically. It's okay to sense that. But the lungs expand and it pushes all the way down to the pelvic floor.

And usually when I do this practice, and I can touch myself that way, I feel that pretty immediately. Today that's different for me because as I'm recording this with you, I'm menstruating. And there's a little bit of attention that's difficult to move and sense past.

I share that with you so that you understand that there is nothing wrong with you if any aspect of this breath practice isn't immediately available to you. Your body is wondrous and it is processing experiences all the time.

There's always a reason that is valid that is there for you to explore as you make your way through this practice. What we have done together is already so deep and so much that it doesn't have to be perfect for it to be beneficial.

So thank you. Let's close this practice by putting your hands on your legs or anywhere your body desires. If you want to bring them back to your belly, do so. I simply want you to send the energy of gratitude to your entire body.

Having gratitude for how it works well enough, it doesn't have to be perfect, just well enough,

to keep you here to keep you present

and gratitude for all that goes on that we are unaware of and that we can take for granted.

Thank you for joining me in this practice today.

Play it again. Look up images of your own beautiful anatomy and know that this will serve review the more you tap in. Thank you.

I look forward to next time.