



eKum Nye

The Power of Breath

Lesson 1 – Mindfulness of Breath

To appreciate the breath's power, it helps to develop a comprehensive picture of the body's inner systems and have a sense of how they operate, how they are interconnected and how they are activated by energy. Mindfulness of breath can improve circulation of energy throughout the body, promoting the health of our vital organs and our mental acumen. The practice may be limited to becoming aware of the coming and going of the breath. Neutrally witnessing the inhale and exhale, we can withdraw from emotionality and connect to the nature of our being. Mindfulness of breath means to make contact, to not forget, and to remain in touch with the energy of breath.

Five distinct kinds of energy condition the overall environment of body and mind (see eKum Nye level V). The breath, which stimulates the vital organs and supports our entire physical system, is the primary energy. Breath is the wind that transports energy throughout the subtle body energy system and at the same time breath is that energy itself. If we want to discover the dimensions of breath, it is essential to relax the body, especially the throat center. Kum Nye postures and movements help to nurture relaxation. They calm down what is overactive (usually the head), awaken what is dormant (usually below the ribcage), and promote an open throat center. Mindfulness of breath helps circulate breath's energy throughout the subtle body energy system.

When developing mindfulness of breath, we first allow the breath to find its natural rhythm, making it easier to cultivate the vital resource of energy. If we were to manipulate the breath without first relaxing the breathing pattern, it is likely we become uptight, strained or anxious, as there is no expanded inner space to support the changes.

During the day, take some moments to sit still and motionless. Sense the stillness of the physical body. This is not an observation, but a sensation. Strange as it may sound, this kind of awareness of making contact is done with the body. Just like the sensation of the fresh mountain air, a cool breeze or the sun warming the body, it is through body awareness that you make contact with the body's stillness. It helps to close your eyes, and you may notice your sense of inner space expanding. The combination of the body's stillness and the increased sense of inner space will allow the breath to find its natural rhythm. Now you can cultivate the breath and begin to discover its power to heal and sustain your highest aspirations.

Once the breath has found its natural rhythm, notice if the pattern is shallow or deep and how deeply it moves into the chest. Sense or visualize the breath passing throughout the body. Make contact with and follow the movement of the breath's energy as it flows into the vital organs and chakras, and stimulates nerves, glands and muscles. As the circulation improves, the energies of body and mind will join, and as this happens, you may begin to notice calmness, like a kind of flavor contained in the coming and going of the breath. As it enters the body, as it circulates and leaves the body, do you sense this flavor of calmness?

Focus on the *feeling* of calmness and encourage yourself to remain in this sensation, producing pleasant feelings that nourish the mind and sustain the being.

Calmness does not need to be an overall feeling; it can be a patch within your experience, as if there is a segmented space that is like a reflective surface. When you enter this calmness, meditation begins. This may be what the words *Shamatha meditation* refer to—a Buddhist term often translated as 'single-pointed concentration.' With less distracting thoughts you can direct yourself towards experiencing more comprehensive pictures of the nature of self and the nature of reality. In the traditional Buddhist terminology this is referred to as Vipassana or insight meditation. A common mistake made by meditators and Kum Nye practitioners who enjoy resting in the calmness, is to think that this is the goal of meditation. It is not. However, one has to enter this calmness first in order to develop clarity.

In the next lesson, will introduce three components of how to create a calm breath almost instantaneously.

Main Practice

Several times a day sit still, without moving at all, sensing the physical stillness of the body and letting the breath find its own rhythm. Do not interfere; it will come. Sit through any restlessness and increase the focus on the stillness of the physical body. Try to remain with this intent and concentration for five consecutive minutes.



Exercises for the Week

Begin with Kum Nye exercises to relax the body, especially the throat center.

1. Seven Gestures
2. KN #17 Lightening Thoughts
3. KN #25 Calming Inner Energy standing or sitting
(please, do the variations during the week)
4. KN #44 Touching the Senses
5. KN #34 Inner Gold
6. **The main exercise of the first lesson – Mindfulness of breath**



Summary of basic mindfulness of breath:

1. Sitting still in the seven gestures and sense the stillness of the physical body.
2. Notice the body is relaxing.
3. Observe the flow of breath entering and leaving the body.
4. Notice if the breath is shallow or deep. Do not judge, simply witness.
5. Follow the movement of energy through the body as it flows into the vital organs and chakras.
6. When the energy flows smoothly, you will feel more energized and alert. Do you? If you do not, you may have landed in a dense, dark area within the body where no thoughts can keep you alert. Make contact with feeling the *movement* of energy even in such areas; straighten the body, maybe do some eye exercises if you keep falling asleep and ending up in a stupor.
7. Learn to direct the movement of energy toward the dark and dense areas in the body.
8. Notice that the movement of the breath while inhaling and exhaling has a kind of flavor, a sense of calmness
9. Stabilize this flow of feeling of calmness.
10. Enter the calmness.

It is difficult to remember ten points, so we suggest you take them three or four at a time. The basic reminders should be:

- a. *Observe the flow of breath*, be a witness, not a judge
- b. *Follow the movement* of energy through the body
- c. *Contact a feeling of calmness* and enter.

When you finish your practice, briefly bring your awareness into the hands. Your hands chakras, and with awareness in the hands it is easier to embody your experience of the practice and to bring this kind of awareness into your daily life.

Recommended reading:

The Joy of Being, chapter Breath, Energy, Feeling, p. 41, 42 and top of 43.

Om Ah Hum!



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