BREATH OPTIMIZATION

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Breath Optimization – Breathing for Optimal Health and Performance

Self Observation

Sit in a comfortable position and observe your body without manipulating anything.

Notice how your body breathes:

- Notice how deep or shallow the breath is?
- Notice if you are breathing with the diaphragm (does the belly expand out, or contract in)? If it helps, place one hand on the belly and one hand on the chest.
- Notice if you are breathing with the chest muscles (does the belly stay still and only the chest expands)? If it helps, place a hand(s) on chest.
- Notice if belly/chest breathing seems easy and gentle OR is it effortful in any way?
- Notice the exhale, air going out, is there any pushing OR is it comfortable and easy?
- Is there a transition time between the exhale and inhale?
- Does the inhale feel adequate; are you getting enough air?
- Do you notice if you are holding your breath?
- If chest breathing, are your shoulders moving?

What does breathing feel like when you only observe it?

- Are you comfortable letting the body breathe by itself?
- Do you feel like you want to take over?
- Is there anxiety, nervousness, or tension while exhaling/inhaling?
- Is there "worry" about getting enough air at the end of the exhale?
- How do you feel during the time between the exhale and inhale?
- Are there thoughts or memories that show up near the end of the exhale/inhale?
- Do you feel like you want to take a breath?
- Does the inhale seem big enough?
- Would it be easy to take a deep breath?
- What is your opinion about what's happening while you watch?