

# Ep #148: Exploring Your Breath Part 6 - Mechanics of Breathing: A Gentle Practice 3



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Susi Hately**

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**Male Announcer:** You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Welcome and welcome back. We are in the middle of the Mechanics of Breathing Exploring Your Breath miniseries. The whole idea here is to help you tune into your whole system and what contributes to better breathing.

So often we think about breath as just the air coming in and the air going out. We think about the respiratory system and what we need to do to get more air in. And very rarely do we think about the impact of our body, like the tissue around our ribs, or our neck, our abdomen, pelvis, even our feet, and how that can impact the way that our body as a mechanical pump functions, which can impact the way the breath can come in.

And as we tune into that, as we learn to recognize what's contributing to how that breath is coming in and coming out, it's very significant. And then changes can be made and then breathing can improve. And then the result of that breath improvement can have really profound impact in many ways that you live.

And then, of course, the other benefit to this, because this is not just a biomechanics and anatomical exploration. But it's a yoga mindful awareness journey, if I can use that word, where as you quiet yourself and tune in, you're accessing more of that right side of your brain. And as you do that you're able to quiet the noise that is in the left side of your brain, yeah?

And as you do that, some really interesting things arise and can support you in whatever recovery and healing journey that you have. And not just in recovery and healing, but in rejuvenation, of building capacity, of filling your tank. So that not only are you getting better, but you're also becoming stronger. You're able to utilize those key characteristics that are so you, so much more effectively.

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So I find that many of my clients who tend to be driven and ambitious, they tend to be less hard about the application of that drive and ambition. It's still there, it's still very much focused, but it's less hard. For many of my very creative folks, who can sometimes get a little scattered, that creativity is still very much there but what's created is created with more flow, with less scatteredness, right?

So as we're able to settle in and quiet, that which is our very best character starts to really become amplified because our capacity is bigger, our rejuvenation is better, yeah? And if you resonate with what I'm teaching here, you will really love the multi week series I'm running on mechanics of breathing. This is my third iteration of this program, I've been teaching it for over 10 years.

I've added more to it, brought in some ideas around sleep apnea, grinding, it's really, really great. My dentist is coming and is involved, it's going to be so good. So if you're resonating with what I'm sharing and you want to dig in more, get the video drops, the audio drops, as well as almost weekly teaching with me and my dentist, and there might be another surprise guest coming along as well.

What you'll be able to gain from it at the end is not only will your breathing be better, if you're a health professional or a teacher of any sort, the way that you're applying this with your students or your clients, the application of this, it's so practical and so straightforward. Really, really simple to do. Anyway, it would be an honor for me to teach you. And you can learn more at [learn.functionalsynergy.com/breathing](http://learn.functionalsynergy.com/breathing).

So we're going to get into a guided practice today, it builds upon the other two, but this time we're going to stay in a side bending routine. I'm going to take you through two side bends. One of them will start you in seated, the other one will bring you down either onto a floor or onto your couch. The idea here is to connect you, again, with your ribcage and feel what happens as you are connecting into that ribcage, breathing into the ribcage, and then what occurs elsewhere in your body, yeah?

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So what you're going to need is a comfortable place to sit. So that could be on your couch, it could be in a chair, it could be sitting on the floor. The key is if you're on the floor, I'm not a huge fan of that by the way, but if you're there make sure, if you can, to have yourself seated with your pelvis as neutral as you can. I mean you're in seated, so there's going to be a little bit of a posterior tilt.

But so often when people are sitting directly on the floor, they're really quite rounded through their spine. So if you can sit up on a bolster so that your pelvis can get a little bit more closer to neutral, so you can be a bit more easily vertical, that will work for the side bending much more effectively, okay?

Then, after I walk you through the sitting side bend, we're going to come down either onto your side on the floor or onto your couch or your bed, have a pillow, or a rolled blanket. If you have one of my felt pads, those are the white covered, it almost looks like a pillow cover, but a white covered felt woolen pad, have that handy. So something that you can roll and lie over on your side.

Now, there will be a video of what this looks like on the episode web page. So if you need to see a video of this, by all means, check that out on the episode web page, okay?

So to begin with we're going to take ourselves into a side bend, this is not a new movement for me to share on the podcast. It's just taking you through the side bending motion. So when you come down onto the pillow or the felt pad or the blanket or towel, you'll have an idea of where we're going. So feel initially the sitting bones on the chair, or on the floor, or on the prop, wherever you are. And notice yourself breathing. Feel that inhale coming in and feel the exhale going out.

Okay, so let's come into the side bend. You're going to be moving to your left to begin. Side bend to the left, your weight is going to come a bit more on to your left sitting bone. But feel that you can notice the right sitting bone

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still on whatever you're seated. So even though your weight is coming over more to that left, you can still feel that sitting bone on the right side connecting to whatever you're sitting on.

And then come back up to vertical and let's move to the right now. Same idea, more weight is coming over to the right but you can still connect with the left. Very good, could come back up. All right, now this time we're moving over to the left and feel your right side ribcage.

And without increasing the volume of your breath, can you direct the breath to the side of your ribs and imagine you can breathe those ribs out laterally. Breathe into those ribs. And then come back up. And then over to the right. Breathe into the side ribs on the left side. And then back up.

Okay, one more time. Over to the left, breathe into the right side ribs. And then come back up. And then over to your right, breathe into the left side ribs. Stay connected to the pelvis. There you go. And then coming back up. Okay. So now notice what you're experiencing here. How does your breath feel any different? Is there anything new that's arising?

So now having completed the sitting side bend we're going to move into the side lying whether you're on your bed, on the couch, or on the floor. And to give an idea of what you'll be doing is you'll be taking the prop, whether it's a blanket, or the felt pad, a pillow, or a towel, and you'll be lying on your left side to begin with with that prop under your ribs, under the left ribs.

Aim for about the middle of your ribs, unless it's a pillow which is a lot bigger. But aim for about the middle of the ribs so that you're in a comfortable position where you're side bending over that prop.

Now, there's a couple things to keep in mind as you're setting yourself up. You'll be sort of leaning on the side of your hip as you're about to lie on your side over the prop. Watch that you don't lean forward or lean back, like rolling forward or rolling back. Really try to keep into a side moving position and have it so that your armpit is somewhat free.

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Now, if you've got a pillow, that's probably not going to happen but that's okay because the pillow is covering your whole ribcage. But if it's the felt pad or the blanket or towel, aim for the middle part of your ribcage of where to place it.

And then you might need something for your head. You can either use your hand or have another pillow or a block or another blanket for the head so that you're really, really comfortable here. And your knees will probably be bent. They might be straight, but I find when they're straight people's pelvises can roll forward or back quite easily.

And so the bent knee position can be helpful for providing that stability. You might even find that placing a blanket or a pillow between your legs to support your legs and your knees can also be helpful. So that's the setup in mind that you can consider.

And if you haven't quite gotten into it, if you're just still gathering the props around to support you, I'll walk you through your movement into it. So with the pillow, the towel, the blanket, or the felt pad, leaning over onto your side, we'll come onto the left side. And aim to place the prop around the middle of your ribcage, particularly if it's the towel or the felt pad or the blanket so that there's freedom in the armpit.

And then lean straight to your side, watch that you don't deviate forward or back. And if you're lying over a pillow, it's covering so much of that ribcage so it's okay that it might be in the armpit, just make sure that you're comfortable. So you're directly going to the side. And if you need anything between the legs, because sometimes the top leg can come in at an angle and that can create some strain on the upper hip or in the back.

The aim here is to be as comfortable as possible so that your jaw can relax, your eyes can soften, and your breath can really settle. So consider how you can be 5 to 15% more comfortable in this position. Okay, so if you need a bit more time to set up, you can just press pause and then when you're ready to go, press play again.

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And again, the prop is aiming for about the middle of the ribcage, so not in the space between your ribs and your pelvis. It's not into your lower back area, but on the ribcage area. And if you feel like it's pushing, like if you've got the felt pad and you feel like the prop is really hard, then you can unroll the felt pad or just do away with it and instead use a rolled towel or blanket..

Okay, and if you remember now back to the first movement we did while you were sitting in your side bend and coming in and moving to the side and feeling the side of your ribs and how you are breathing into those side ribs, that's what we'll be doing in just a moment. So notice as you're lying here over the pad, or the pillow, or the blanket, I'll call it the prop going forward. Notice where your breath feels the easiest.

Does it feel easy coming into the top set of ribs, meaning the ribs pointed toward the sky right now? Or does it feel easier going into the bottom set of ribs, the ones that are on the prop? So we'll begin with working with this set of ribs that it's easier.

So imagine you can breathe into the ribs that are easier, whichever ones feel like the breath is able to access more and take five breaths breathing into the easier set of ribs. Okay, when the fifth breath is complete, then bring your awareness to the other set of ribs.

It might be a bit harder to feel or maybe they don't move quite as well. Sometimes for some people, it's the top set, so the set that's up towards the sky, other people it's the bottom set. So there's no right or wrong answer here. Bringing the breath and the awareness to that other set of ribs start to breathe into that set. And be easy with yourself. Five times.

All right, lovely. And then let that go and just breathe easy laying over the prop. And in a couple more breaths we're going to come off of the prop and just lie flat on your back. And once you're on your back, now notice what it is that you're experiencing.



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And then move over to your other side. So you're laying over on your right side now. And the amount of support that you need under your right side might be different than the left. And then once you're here, notice again which set of ribs, either the ones touching the prop or the ones pointing or facing up to the sky. Whichever ones are easier, bring your breath and attention to there. And imagine expanding those ribs without increasing the volume of your breath.

Okay, and then take your attention to the other set of ribs. This one is the more difficult ones to either feel or perceive or they just don't move as well with the breath generally. And then take the awareness there and allow your breath to expand into that set of ribs. Try not to make an argument here, just allow the breath to gently connect with that set of ribs about five times.

There you go. And then take a breather here, let that technique go and just be on the side. And then in a couple more breaths, when you're ready, come off of the prop and lay flat on your back. Okay, now notice what you feel. Now notice if anything is new or different with how your ribcage feels or how you feel, or how your breath is moving.

It's interesting because we have all this connective tissue and muscle tissue in and around the ribs and we sometimes don't think about the expansion of the ribs laterally. Even when we know this information, we sometimes just don't quite connect with it. And then when we do take just five breaths, it can have a really big impact for some people.

So if you are one of those people it had an impact for, consider this as a practice for you to play with each day. And you can do it on your side you can do it in sitting you can do just connecting to the ribs themselves and allowing for yourself to think about taking those ribs wide as you breathe into them. And then notice what changes as a result, yeah?

And if this resonates with you and you want to dig more into movement, and breath, the mechanics of breath, and the impact with that on your

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voice, on sleep apnea, grinding, better breathing overall, then check out the Mechanics of Breathing 3.0 at [learn.functionalsynergy.com/breathing](http://learn.functionalsynergy.com/breathing). It would be such an honor to work with you. Have a great time exploring.

If this episode has resonated and you're looking to deepen this idea of getting your body back on board, of listening deeply to your symptoms, of listening to the whispers so you don't have to hear the screams and you're looking for one to one support or professional training, then reach out to us at [health@functionalsynergy.com](mailto:health@functionalsynergy.com) where we can customize your learning path. That's [health@functionalsynergy.com](mailto:health@functionalsynergy.com). Looking forward to hearing from you.