

Ep #76: Breathing and Movement to Settle and Calm



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hatley

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hatley. 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 Hatley.

Welcome back to the podcast. With this episode I want to move into a breathing and movement practice. The last time I specifically taught breath exercise was back in episodes 26 and 22. 26 was about Breathing When Wired and Better Breathing was episode 22.

And both of those episodes were really highly downloaded, we got lots of feedback about them. And interestingly enough, they were right at around this time of year. So this episode's dropping just in and around December, right after Thanksgiving for my American friends and clients.

And as we move toward the festivities, if that's something that you celebrate, particularly if you are in my side of the world, like Canada, North America, northern Europe, the light is starting to get a lot less during the days and we're getting a lot longer nights. So there can just be a feeling of growing anxiety or trepidation or any of that sort of quality.

So that's why I want to share this episode and subsequent episodes, there will be one more before Christmas at least. And just something where you can tune back in, settle in, calm in, and just feel yourself.

Now if you think other people would really love this, it would be so awesome if you could post a comment. Because the comments, when Apple and other podcast hosts see the comments, that's when the episodes and the podcast comes up for people who are searching.

So without further ado, let's dive into your breathing. And to begin with, I simply want you to notice your breath. And it becomes really powerful because you are paying attention to something that happens every moment of every day. Breath coming in, breath going out. Much like you're on a raft and the waves are taking you up and they're bringing you back down.

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatley

Ep #76: Breathing and Movement to Settle and Calm

So as you're doing that, just pay attention to what it is that you actually notice. It's like you're creating a baseline of simply where your breath is now. I find it so interesting when I notice myself holding my breath. Or if I've driven through a really icy, snowy patch in the mountains, just where the breath is or how my pelvic floor may have tightened, or my abdomen may have tightened. And just tuning into those experiences of the reality of how we respond to the things that are occurring around us, to the thoughts that we have.

So you're tuning in to just where you are at now and how your day has been with you how you've been with your day, the ebbs and the flows. And it's interesting to be able to name the quality of your breathing. So full, ratchety, tight, tense, thin, limited, full, warm, expressive, alive, vibrant. I mean, it could be anything. What I just provided as ideas is really just the tip of the pile of the various ways to describe how the breath is coming in and going out.

You might even have a breathing condition. So maybe there's something going on with your lungs. Maybe you're overcoming Covid, maybe you have long haul Covid, maybe there's some pneumonia, maybe you've had a lung removed. Maybe you have allergies or asthma, or your ribcage is really just super tight. Just notice what's there.

And then as you go through the practice, notice how each of the things that I'm suggesting has an impact. So notice while you're in it, and this is where I talk a lot about yellow lights in other episodes and just paying attention and being aware. And just noticing how what you're doing has impact either in a positive way, a neutral way, or a negative way. Because that's when you really start to figure out that which you need.

So as we begin to move, clue into that breath again. Notice if there's any anticipation for the movement. And whether you're walking, or sitting, or standing, can you take your shoulders up to your ears. And then can you pull your shoulder blades back to your spine and then down your back.

Ep #76: Breathing and Movement to Settle and Calm

So this is a shoulder roll, the shoulders come up to your ears, you pull them back towards your spine, and then down your back. Now the pace at which you go with this is solely your own. And of course, I can't see you so I can't specifically direct you, nor do I want to state like this is the tempo you must go. So I really want you to pay attention to what your own tempo is.

And then as you play with this, consider starting the raising up of your shoulder blades and shoulders at the start of your inhale. And then finish that raising up at the end of your inhale. And then as you pull the shoulder blades together, that's the start of your exhale. And as they drop back down your back, that's the ending of your exhale.

So now you can move with the rhythm of the breath coming in, reaching the top of the inhale and the breath now going out. Good, and then up with the inhale and then out with the exhale.

Just follow that inhale and exhale. Follow that connection to your blades in your shoulders moving. With the process of this technique, you might also notice things further afield from your shoulders or your breath.

It's not uncommon for people to notice their toes, or their feet, or their knees, or their pelvic floor. They may even notice their abdomen or their back. Sometimes it's them relaxing, sometimes it's more of a heightened tension.

So the thing to pay attention to is the tension creeping up because of the breathing exercise. Or are you simply noticing that the tension is there? Because sometimes we can become aware of things and initially it's like, "Oh, this feels kind of crappy." And you're simply becoming aware of it. So see if you can discern that.

All right, lovely. So continuing to take the shoulders up, pull the blades back and then down. You can do this for as long as you would like and as long as it's comfortable, as long as you're getting something from it. And you can always pause me as I move into the next exercise. And when you're ready to come along with me then press play.

Ep #76: Breathing and Movement to Settle and Calm

We're now going to do some nodding of the head. So the chin is going to come toward the chest and then you're going to lift the head back up again. Chin comes toward the chest, and then head lifts up. So as you're bringing the chin towards your chest, that's the exhale as you lift your head back up. That's your inhale. Exhale, chin comes down. Inhale, chin comes up. Really, really easy here.

And can you move at a tempo that matches the pace of your breathing? So you're exhaling and the head is dropping, inhaling head is lifting. So you finish the inhale at the end of the exhale. Sometimes if you move a little too fast, you can get a bit dizzy. So can you keep that tempo smooth and coordinated and with your breath?

Okay, now you can do this for as many as you'd like. Press pause if you would like. When you're ready we're going to move into shaking the head. So turning the head left, back to center, and then right, back to center, and then left.

And there's two ways you can explore the breath here. You can inhale as you take your head to the left, exhale as you go back to center. Inhale as you take your head right, exhale back to the center. Or you can go, once your heads way over to the left, you can inhale, bring your head all the way over to the right, exhale, bring your head all the way over to the left.

So it all depends on how it feels, you can cut the movement into halves, or do the full movement for each phase of breath. So notice what works for you. And as you're doing it, notice what you're feeling further afield. Maybe something through your ribs, maybe something through your belly, maybe something through your hips or your feet.

Okay, now we're going to combine the previous two, so some nodding with some turning. So here's how it will go, you will turn your head to your left and then nod your head. Bring your head back to center and then turn your head to your right. Nod your head when it reaches the comfortable end range at the right. And then bring your head back to center. Turn your head

Ep #76: Breathing and Movement to Settle and Calm

to the left. Now you could nod once, you can nod twice or three times. And then come back to center, and then over to the right.

Now you know the rhythm of the movement, now notice your breath. Really do your best to allow yourself to be guided by your breath in terms of how quickly you move, how you move. And then bring yourself back to start and now just notice what it is that you feel.

Now if you're in a position where you can do a slight twist, this will be really interesting to play with. You can be seated and take your hands into prayer position, so palms touching. Middle finger sits under your chin and then begin to take a twist so that your chin stays in line with your breastbone and then come on back.

We've just done a couple of things with your neck and your head. And so now I want to just have you move through your ribs rather than specifically your neck.

So you're taking yourself into a twist. Chin is staying in line with your breastbone and that's where the hands being placed at your chin can be really helpful. And then come back to center and move the other direction.

And as you're now doing this, now that you know the tempo, as you're doing this, notice yourself breathing. Now I'm not a typical yoga teacher who says inhale and lift and then twist on your exhale. That's not my style. I used to say you're in the position that you're in. You're starting in a somewhat vertical place, and then allow yourself to twist.

And the reason why is because lots of times people are lifting up through the spine, they're flaring their ribs, they're lifting their chin. And I've just found it just a little bit easier for people just to simply be aware and notice and it can be very revealing for them. All right, lovely.

And then come on back and now notice what you're experiencing through your body and your breath. If there's anything new, anything different.

Ep #76: Breathing and Movement to Settle and Calm

Okay, so now let's take your hand, you're going to find the middle of your breastbone and then take your two fingers, index finger and the middle finger, maybe the third finger, the ring finger, and then gently take circles with those fingers.

And we're staying in one point in the middle of the breastbone, pressing about as hard as a gentle caress. So not really deep, we're not trying to hurt the knuckles of our hands. We're not pushing really hard with the tips of the fingers, just really easy.

And think about how you're just in the area of your heart and your lungs. And also think about how your hands are an extension of your heart. And what I mean by that is looking at Chinese medicine, the heart and lung meridians move from those organs into the hands. So you can kind of imagine that your hands are this extension of your heart.

So allow your hand to be that heart moving in circles, those fingers are moving in circles on the breastbone. And now easily breathe. Lovely, okay, and then let the hands come down. And now notice what it is that you feel.

Notice what's happening with your breathing. Notice if your breathing feels any different from the baseline at the beginning of this practice. And there might be nothing that's different, there might be a lot that's different, there might be a quality that's different.

The depth of your breathing might be different. How you notice it, or the words you describe, it could be slower. Just pay attention. See what's there and know that if you have found this really beneficial, you can do this anytime, anywhere. A breath, an inhale and an exhale, a remarkable tool to help you settle and to calm.

If you have found this really helpful and you are a yoga teacher or a health professional who loves yoga and has an inkling towards wanting to integrate more yoga therapeutically for yourself and for your clients, you really have this yearning inside of you to do something bigger. You know you are not on this planet at this time just by mistake. You know you're

Ep #76: Breathing and Movement to Settle and Calm

here at this time on purpose and there's something that you really, really, really want to do.

You might be a little bit scared of getting depleted, you might be depleted. You might be a little bit scared of making it all work, like how do you actually do this thing? Well, if that's the case and you are someone who's got a spark inside of them, and you want the support, you will love my yoga therapy certification program. Our next cohort is beginning in January. So that's open for all of those folks who have finished module one.

And if you don't have module one, and you do want to join us, that begins in the spring. And if that is interesting to you, then you will want to connect with us by emailing health@functionalsynergy.com.

Our trainees and our grads are just kicking it. Far beyond what typical yoga therapists earn, which by the last stats was about \$10,000 a year. Our grads just do like way more than that and they're not depleted, they're not working like crazy. They've got these great lives, making a big difference, and living a mission that really turns them on.

So if that's something that interests you, you will want to connect with us and you could find us at health@functionalsynergy.com. Looking so forward to working with you.