Gentle Yoga for Mobility and Relaxation

Lecture 1: Seated Breathing



PHSL 160 B

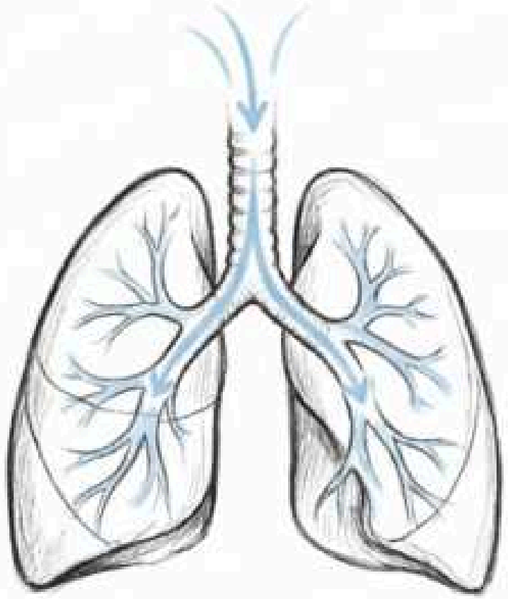
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Three Core Questions

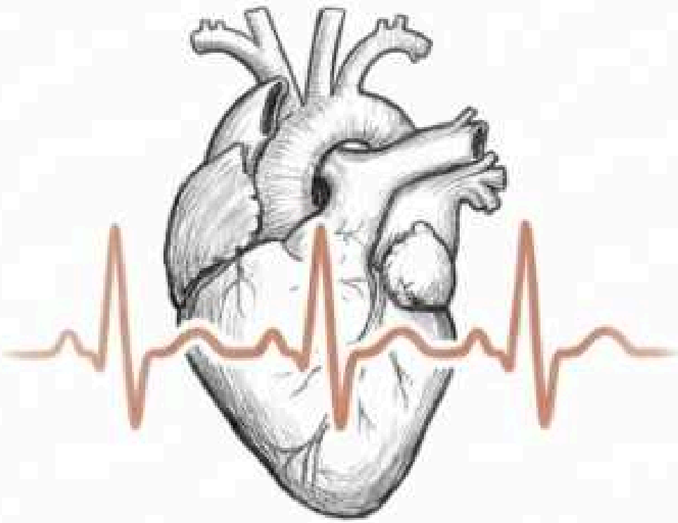
1.1



How to sit?



What is good breathing?



Why does it calm?

Goal: A one-minute routine.

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Establishing the Seat

1.2



Floor: On a blanket/cushion.
Hips > Knees.

=



Chair: Front half. Feet flat.

Both allow the pelvis to tip forward
and the spine to rise effortlessly.

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Tall, Not Stiff

1.3



Crown drawn upward
(like a thread)

Gaze rests
(or eyes closed)

Shoulders drop
away from ears

Jaw and face soften

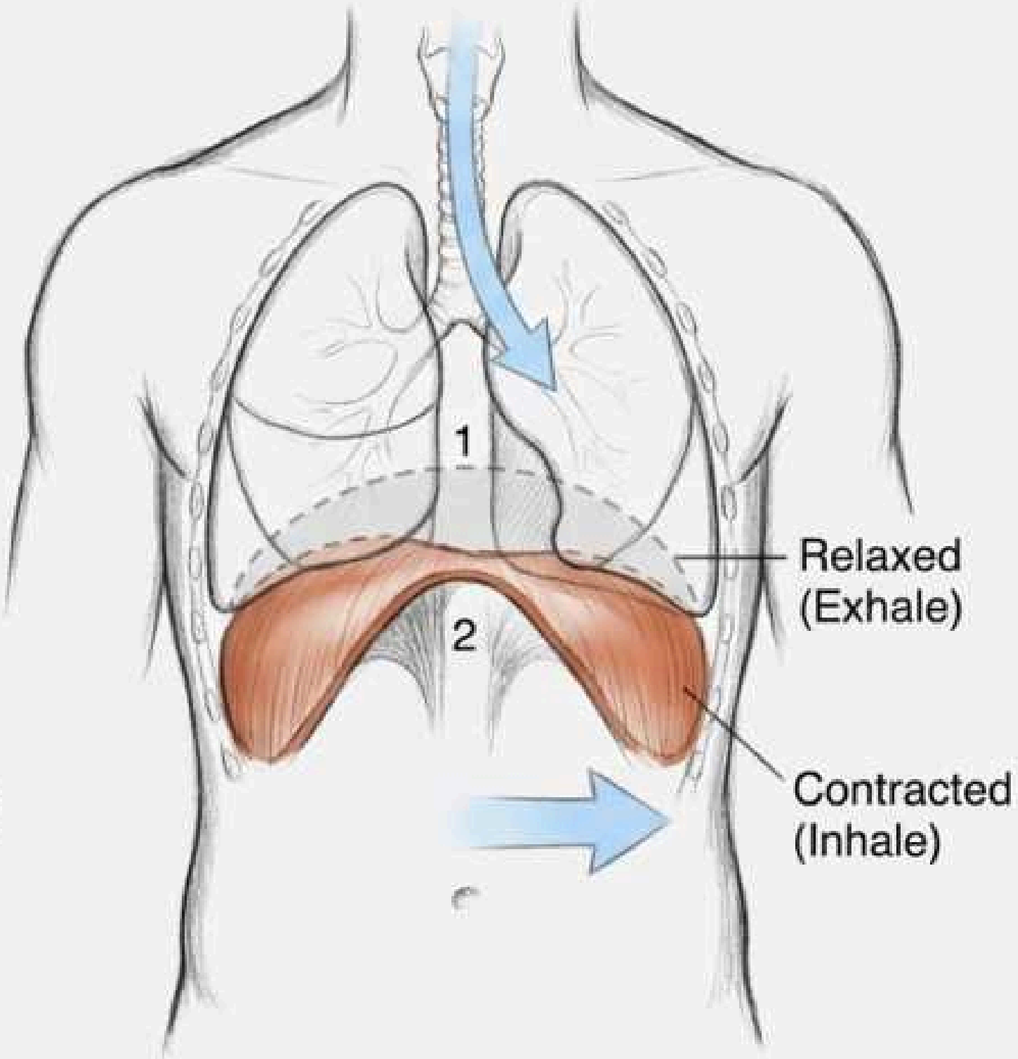
Hands rest on thighs

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Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing

1.4

Inhale:
Diaphragm contracts
→ flattens & moves down
→ draws air in
→ belly pushes out.



Exhale:
Diaphragm relaxes
→ rises →
air flows out.

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Feeling the Breath

Chest Hand:
Stays relatively still.



Belly Hand:
Rises on inhale,
settles on exhale.

Stressed breathing happens high in the chest and neck.
Belly breathing lets those muscles rest.

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Breathe Through the Nose



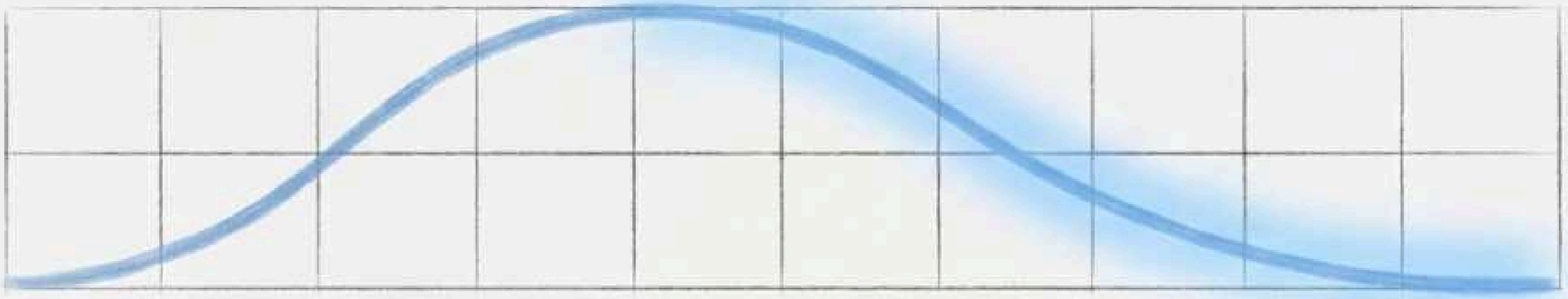
- Warms the air
- Moistens the air
- Filters the air
- Naturally slows the breath

Blocked nose? Gentle mouth breathing is fine.

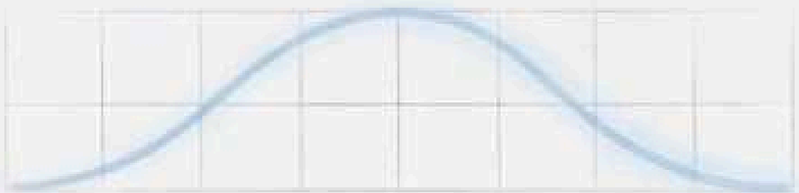
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Slowing the Breath (Without Strain)

Inhale (4 counts) Exhale (6 counts) — Extra Relaxing



(4s In + 6s Out = 10s cycle) = ~6 Breaths / Minute.

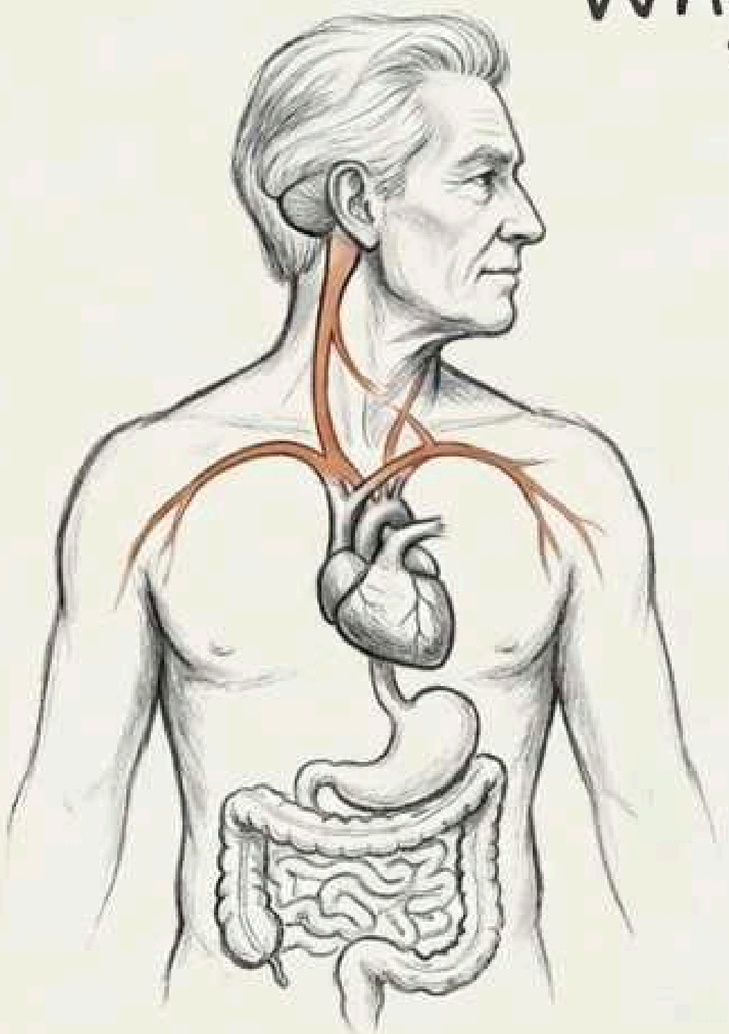


If 4:6 feels too long, try 3 In : 4 Out.

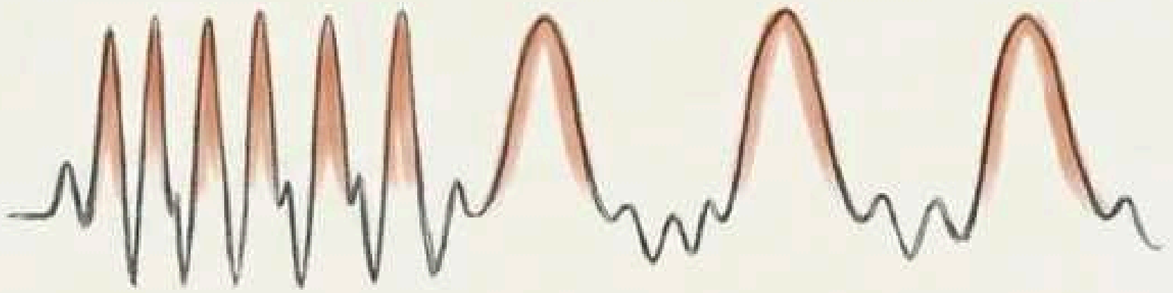
The breath should never feel forced or short of air.

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Why Does it Work?



Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia



Inhale: Heart speeds up slightly.

Exhale: Heart slows down (controlled by the Vagus Nerve — the parasympathetic rest-and-digest main nerve).

Slow breathing (~6 breaths/min) makes these swings larger, **increasing Heart Rate Variability (HRV)** and lowering anxiety.

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Yoga & Pranayama Context

Traditional Pranayama	This Routine
Practices often include complex techniques like alternate-nostril breathing and breath retention.	Uses only gentle, natural slow breathing.



No breath-holding. People with heart or lung conditions should avoid breath-holding unless doctor-approved.

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Common Mistakes

The Don'ts



1. Forcing a huge breath (causes dizziness)



2. Lifting shoulders on each inhale



3. Slumping as the minute goes on

The Do



Breathing should feel easy, quiet, and smooth



If you feel light-headed, simply return to normal breathing

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The Wandering Mind



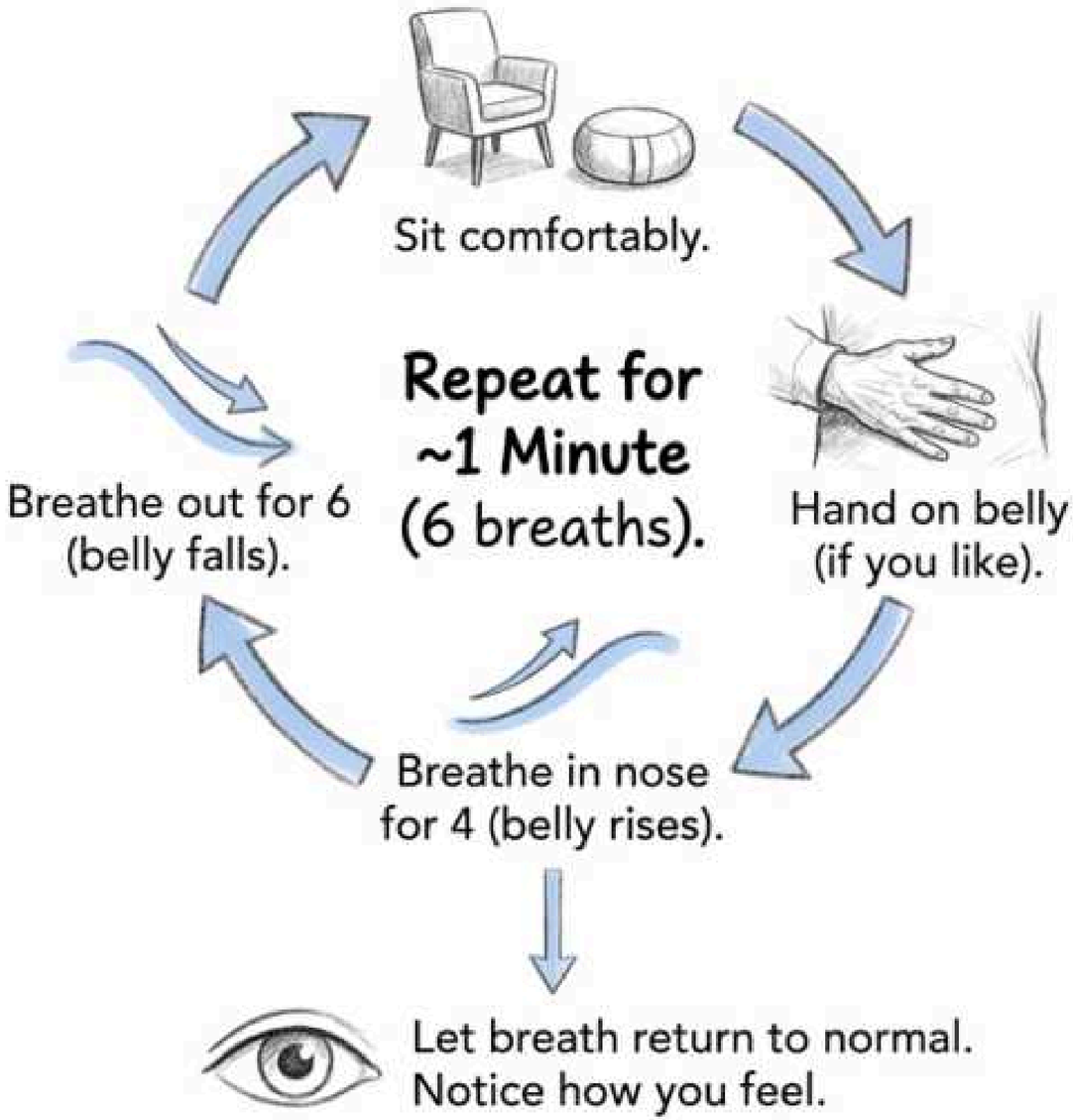
Each time you drift, gently return your attention to the feeling of the breath at the nostrils or the belly.

Notice where your mind goes. Thoughts will come; that is normal.

This gentle returning, again and again, is the beginning of meditation.

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The Practice (The 1-Minute Routine)



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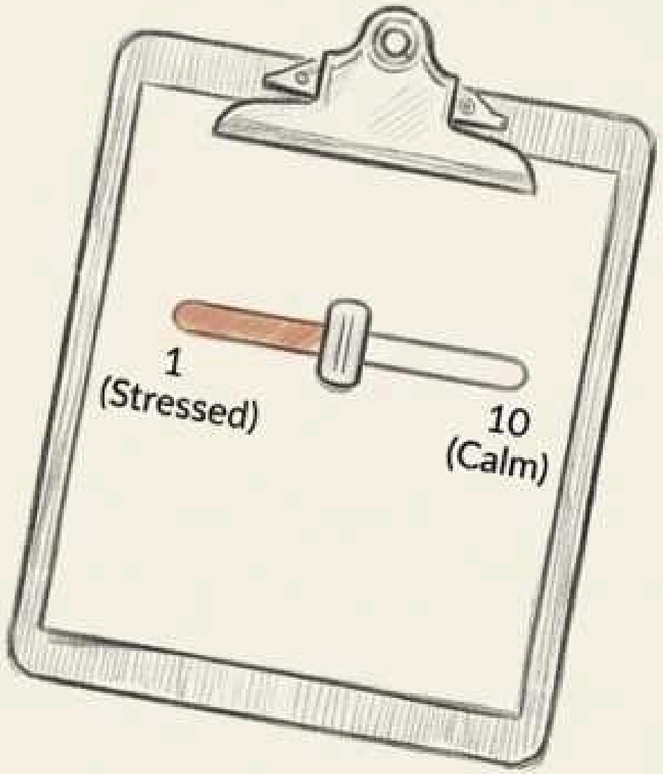
Closing Exercise: Tracking

Before and After the 1-Minute Routine:



1. Count your pulse at the wrist for 30 seconds.

2. Score how calm you feel on a scale from 1 (Stressed) to 10 (Calm).



Track this data over a week.
Do you see a pattern?

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1 ✓	2 ✓	3 ✓	4 ✓	5 ✓	6	7

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