



THE LOFT

PILATES STUDIO

Free Exercise: BREATHING August 2007

BREATHING: Breathing is the essence of life and one of the fundamentals of Pilates. There are many different breathing exercises; Joseph Pilates, an asthmatic, designed this one. Also, the best way to reconnect your mind and body is by noticing your breath.

Anatomy: Many muscles are involved in breathing, some having a primary role, such as the diaphragm and the lungs. The intercostals, pectoralis minor and some of the shoulder blades muscles will have a secondary role, assisting with the expansion and deflation of the ribcage.

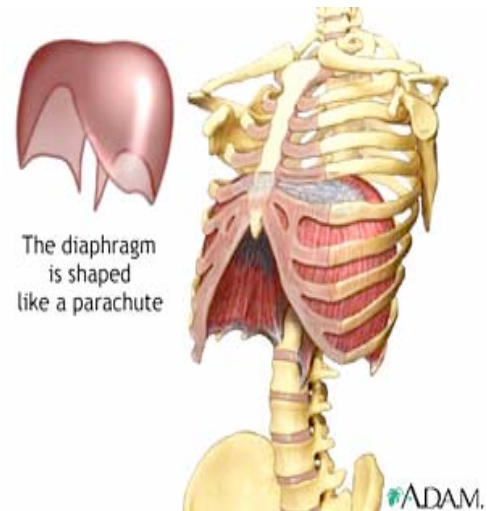
Role: Through our breath we live, detoxify, nourish our cells, calm our nervous system and communicate.

Position: Lie down on your back, with your knees bent, feet in a comfortable place.

Exercise: Notice your natural breathing. Don't do anything else for a few minutes. Simply observe. What do you notice? What is moving with your breath? Is it moving up/down? Notice the speed of your breath and your thoughts.

Now try starting your breath in the lower back part of your ribcage and allow it to move upward behind your breastbone. **DO NOT FORCE!** When exhaling, let the air leave the top part of your ribcage (behind the breastbone) and finish emptying out at the very bottom part of your ribcage. Repeat this a few more times. Think of inflating and deflating a balloon. Notice your body melting into the mat. Feel yourself relaxing. The breath will become easier as you continue.

Note: It is important to work from your natural breath. Trying to force more air in will counteract what you're trying to do. It may take a while to get the breath to move all the way up... please be patient.



The diaphragm is shaped like a parachute

