

FOOD & MOOD

COACHING

KAPALABHATI BREATHING

(YOGIC BREATH OF FIRE): THE 'WHY' AND 'HOW'

WHY?

Kapalabhati is traditional yogic pranayama (breathing exercise) that translates to 'skull shining' and has many positive effects.

You will notice the overall intensity of this exercise to be more active and 'fiery' compared to the other five exercises we have practiced so far. In contrast, Kapalabhati requires an active (forced) exhale out of the nose and a passive (reactive) inhale through the nose.

This breathing exercise:

- + **Gets energy moving**
- + **Massages the digestive tract**
- + **Warms the body**
- + **Brings a sense of peace and calm to mind and body**

Note, if you are new to Kapalabhati, you may feel a little lightheaded in the first practice. If this is your experience, know it is normal and simply take a deep breath and return to your natural breath.

Wait a few moments to return to normal breathing, before practicing again if you would like to.

HOW?

1. Sit in a comfortable upright position.
2. Bring your hands to your belly button and gently close your mouth to inhale and exhale easily through the nose.
3. For your first few rounds of breath, breathe at a pace that is natural and usual for you. Noticing the belly move into your hands on the inhale and away from your hands towards the spine on the exhale. Start to engage your abdominals actively to squeeze air fully from your belly and lungs on the exhale.
4. Take a deep inhale to prepare for Kapalabhati
5. Actively exhale through the nose by contracting your abdominal in toward the spine. You should notice a 'huffing' sound as air is forced through the nostrils.
6. Relax the stomach (air will naturally suck into the nose to fill the belly) and repeat the active exhale in a rapid rhythmic fashion – generally, this is around 1 breath per second or slightly faster, 2 breaths per second.



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7. On your last exhale, as you come to the end of your round, exhale for as long as you can and then take a deep inhalation and return your breath, to your natural rhythm.
8. It is really important to start slowly; perhaps starting with 5 breaths in a row.

Important notes:

- + This exercise is best performed seated.
- + Practice for a few breaths (5-10) through to 20+ breaths in one round. Practice 1-5 rounds per day
- + You may wish to spread the rounds of Kapalabhati over several minutes with some diaphragmatic breathing in-between.
- + Take note of how you feel before engaging in this practice and afterwards. Simply observe

