

Peaceful breathing, peaceful mind

There is a lot of scientific evidence to support the Lord Buddha's teaching that peaceful breathing helps to make our minds peaceful.

The best way to calm the breathing is not to try to control it but simply to '**relax around it**' - to relax the muscles associated with the breathing. These lie in three areas - the throat, the chest and the belly. If we relax these **in turn** then the breathing will naturally become progressively calm without us trying to control or suppress it.

As we relax the shoulders and throat, the action of breathing moves from the upper chest to the lower chest, if we relax here then it moves to the abdomen, if we soften here it will calm further until it can seem that the body is hardly moving at all.

Notice that as we relax the chest drops at the front and sides, the throat and shoulders tend to relax together, also that sitting with the back upright helps to allow the chest to fall.

If the breathing into the belly or diaphragmatic breathing does not occur naturally, conscious breathing into the area a few times helps to bring this about.

As the breathing becomes subtle and shallow, the mind may also naturally calm.

Furthermore, if we can master this way of **relaxing around** the breathing, perhaps our attitude will come to similarly **relax around** our thoughts and feelings to discover a more spacious mind.

