



Wellness Newsletter

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The Power of Breathing

We take an average of 12 breaths per minute, 720 per hour and over 17,000 per day. Yes, we take that many breaths and we take them for granted. Rarely do we consider just how important that involuntary process is, or that there are proper and improper breathing techniques that can make a big difference in our health. Breathing is made up of two processes: inhalation and expiration. When we inhale the diaphragm moves to expand the body cavity. Our lungs fill with air and the blood pumping through the lungs is oxygenated and then carries that oxygen to our brain and other vital organs. As we exhale, our body expels carbon dioxide.

We seldom think about how we are breathing or that we may be doing it incorrectly. The average person is generally chest breathing, whether they know it or not. The diaphragm separates the chest cavity from the abdomen. In chest breathing, you increase the size of your chest cavity by pulling up. Most of the air then stays in the top of your lungs. This is not efficient.

Signs of Improper Breathing:

- Neck and shoulders moving while breathing
- Breathing that shows excessive involvement of the upper chest and/or neck
- Jerky breathing ending in sobbing or sighing
- Rapid breathing (more than 20 breaths per minute)
- Uneven breathing, such as rapid breathing interrupted by long pauses
- Mouth breathing, even when the nostrils are not blocked
- Too long of a pause from one breath to the next
- Loud and noisy breathing without an underlying medical reason



The opposite of chest or shallow breathing is belly or deep breathing. Learning to breathe from the abdomen is very important because the blood in the lowest part of the lungs is the richest for oxygen.

There are several exercises that can help us learn how to breathe properly and improve our overall health and wellness. First, learn to visualize your breath coming from the deeper part of the lungs and begin to focus on taking deeper breaths. Second, relax your breathing process. Focus on remaining loose but extending your core. Keeping your head straight but allowing your head to remain loose so that it can gently nod. Finally, place your hands on your stomach. Breathe in until you can feel your stomach expand. Breathe out, and gently push your stomach back in as you breathe out. This exercise should help you be more aware of the correct way to breathe.

It is about that time to think about spring cleaning....



Walk down the cleaning products aisle at your local grocery store and it may be a bit overwhelming. There is a cleaning product for every surface of your home, and rarely will they be recommended for use in any other space. Bathroom cleaners are different than kitchen cleaners and floor cleaners can't be used on windows; there are even specialty cleaners for appliances, ovens, microwaves, etc. Beyond the overwhelming quantity and expense, don't forget the toxic factor. Almost every single product on those shelves will contain some kind of toxin or dangerous substance. The US Environmental Protection Agency has noted that many household cleaners contain volatile organic compounds or VOCs, such as formaldehyde and other harsh acids. This is important because exposure to VOCs can lead to several symptoms including: eye, nose and throat irritation; headaches; nausea; liver, kidney and central nervous system damage; loss of coordination and more. Toss the toxins and start cleaning green!

Top Nine Green Ingredients!!

1. White Vinegar – This is a stringent but safe antifungal that will kill germs and bacteria.
2. Baking Soda – This will work as a gentle scouring powder and eliminates odors.
3. Club Soda – Works well as a stain remover and polisher.
4. Olive Oil – Can replace expensive furniture polishers.
5. Lemon Juice – Can work well as a non-toxic bleach alternative, a stain remover and will help to cut grease.
6. Hydrogen Peroxide – At 3% concentration this works well as a non-toxic bleach, a stain remover and a disinfectant.
7. Corn Meal – Works wonders when poured on a carpet spill, allow time to dry and then vacuum it up!
8. Liquid Castile Soap – The word “Castile” means that it is vegetable-based and not animal-based. This cuts grease and can replace any all-purpose cleaners while working as a disinfectant.
9. Essential Oils – These can be added to any cleaning recipe for many reasons. First is the pleasant smell; typical cleaning products have a strong, stringent odor which can be quite unpleasant. Secondly, some essential oils actually have antibacterial, antifungal and insect repelling properties. Some of these include: eucalyptus, peppermint, lemongrass, lavender and green tea, just to name a few.