

Take A Breath

Your body relies on an uninterrupted flow of air. Without air you would die in minutes. Air is so important that we have a respiratory system within us that we never have to think about. Breathe in, breathe out.

When we're calm our breathing gets slower, deeper and quieter. When we're stressed or exercising our breathing gets more shallow, quicker and louder. We know that shallow breathing is inefficient, using more energy and exchanging less air. Inefficient breathing causes us to get out of breath sooner, tiring us out and severely limiting our performance on the court or during our workouts.

The answer to this dilemma is to take a conscious approach to your breathing. When lifting weights, control your breathing by exhaling when you contract your muscles and inhaling as you return to the starting position. When doing an aerobic activity take a slightly longer inhalation and exhalation, remembering to breathe more slowly, deeply and quietly. This technique is a great one during competition as it will calm you down and keep you from feeling the stress and anxiety that can hamper your game. You cannot be upset if your breathing is slow, deep, quiet and regular.

A nice breathing practice at home (or anywhere) is to sit or lay down, close your eyes and place your attention on your breathing as you take eight long deep breaths in and out. Next, put your hands on your belly and make your belly (and hands) rise as your inhale and fall as you exhale for at eight more long deep breaths. Finally, at the end of each exhalation push a little more air out. A larger exhalation means more air exchange and the healthier functioning of your body, which depends on the delivery of oxygen and removal on carbon dioxide.

Yours in health,

Dr. Rick

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