

Are you Starved for Oxygen?

While many turn to supplements and good nutrition to improve their health, far too often the number one essential nutrient is overlooked – Oxygen. You can live a long long time with insufficient calcium, iron or protein, but take away the oxygen and you're going down fast.

Symptoms of poor circulation

- Numbness and tingling in the hands or feet
- Cold hands and feet
- Swelling in the hands or feet
- Poor memory or foggy thinking
- Digestive problems
- Fatigue
- Joint pain and muscle cramping
- Skin color changes – bluish tinge to hands, feet or lips.

Now of course there can be other causes for most of these symptoms, but poor circulation is a major contributor with more health issues than most realize.

Look at your fingernails. Start with your thumb – you should see a moon shaped oval at the base of the nail. The fingernail on the right is healthy. The one on the left shows the sign of not enough oxygen.



Ideally you should see 8 of your 10 fingers with moons (also called lunula). Absence could mean you are not getting enough oxygen in your blood. A bluish color to the fingernails or toenails is also a sign of lack of oxygen. In fact any bluishness to skin, lips or nails suggests you need more oxygen. Deep breathing exercises can make a significant difference.

Deep Breathing Exercise The Wim Hof Method

The Wim Hof Method (named after Wim Hof from the Netherlands) has become popular as a way to condition your body to revitalize and dramatically and quickly improve your health as well as to withstand extreme cold conditions. Look up Wim Hof online for more. This method of deep breathing practice has helped many with:

- Stress reduction.
- Faster recovery from physical exertion.
- Better sleep.
- Improved sports performance.
- Enhanced creativity.
- More focus and mental clarity.

The first part is a breathing exercise, which can be likened to controlled hyperventilation. This is, of course, an oxymoron. Hyperventilation is something, which happens involuntarily. But just imagine the breathing part, without any of the stress triggers that normally cause this way of breathing. The exercise will consist of rapid breathing that will make you relaxed, invigorated and provides more oxygen to the body. The objective of this practice is the complete oxygenation of your blood and cells.

“Warnings: Always do the breathing exercise in a safe environment (e.g. sitting on a couch or laying on the floor) and unforced. Never practice it before or during diving, driving, swimming, taking a bath or any other environment or place where it might be dangerous to faint. The breathing exercise has a profound effect and should be practiced in the way it is explained. If you have (serious) health issues, please always consult a doctor first before practicing.”

1. Get comfortable and close your eyes

Find a comfortable place to do your breathing exercises where you won't be disturbed. You can sit or lie on your back, but do not do this exercise while standing, driving or doing any other activity. Make sure you can expand your lungs freely without feeling any constriction. We recommended doing this practice right after waking up since your stomach is still empty. Lying in bed works great.

2. Do 30-40 power breaths

Once you're comfortable, you can start to breathe in and out 30 times. This is essentially deep breathing at a steady pace in and out through the mouth and /or nose. Just breathe very deep – Don't get hung up on technique. Inhale fully but don't exhale all the way out. As you inhale you should feel your belly rise and on the exhalation, you should feel your belly fall. It may feel a bit like you are hyperventilating, but you are in control. You may also feel a tingling or lightheaded sensation throughout your whole body. This is perfectly normal.

During the 30 power breaths, in your mind examine your body and become as aware of it as possible. Trace your awareness up and down your body and use your intuition as to what parts lack energy and what parts are overflowing with too much pain, discomfort or ill health. Scan for any blockage or stagnation. Consciously send warmth and circulation to those areas. Breathe away negative emotions. Feel the whole body fill up with warmth and love. Allow the negativity to burn away.

Often people report swirling colors and other visual imagery during this exercise. Allow your mind to observe and follow these. Once you encounter them, go into them, embrace them, merge with them. Get to know this inner world and how it correlates to the feeling of tension or blockages in your body. You are not only breathing but becoming more self-aware.

3. Hold your breath

After doing 30-40 power breaths, empty your lungs of air and hold your breath out (lungs empty) for as long as you can comfortably. You may want to time how long you hold your breath with a stopwatch if you're interested in recording your results. Your breath retention length of time will increase with practice. As a test, some will see how many push-ups they can do as they hold their breath out with empty lungs. This can give you an indication of how oxygenated your body is. With experience you will increase the breath retention and amount of push-ups you can do.

4. Breathe in for 10 seconds

After the breath retention, take a deep breath in and hold it for 10-15 seconds, before exhaling. You may want to contract the muscles in your body during this time. Clench fists, arms and legs or just stretch. After the 10-15 seconds you have completed the first round.

5. Repeat steps 1-4

Repeat the whole process for another two rounds.

6. Meditate

After you complete the 3 rounds, you can then go into your regular practice of meditation or meditate or relax for five minutes before you get up. If you're new to meditation you can begin by closing your eyes and simply bring your awareness to your breathing. In and out. Allow your mind to wander, but if you go into a worry mode or start thinking of “all the things you need to do” – refocus on your breathing. The breathing exercises are also a good way to begin the Christ Centered Meditation. Your mind will be clear and more relaxed after the breathing exercise. With daily practice your health, energy and fingernails will improve.

Dr Kyle Christensen 2019