

Heartbeat Breath – Calming Breath

If you are in your own space it is nice to do this practice with some low and slow background music playing. If you choose music with lyrics, be certain that the lyrics do not distract you.

As you go through this practice you might notice that your body takes on a subtle rocking motion. Although this rocking motion is not important in and of itself, please allow such rocking to occur if indeed it does start to happen. From a seated position, take a minute or so and quiet your thinking mind. Usually, a good way to begin the process of quieting down, is to first take a couple of deep breaths.

As you begin to quiet down, notice if you can, your heartbeat. You might simply be able to feel your heartbeat pulsing in you, or you might need to feel your pulse by either placing your hand on your heart; placing your fingers on your carotid artery; or placing your fingers along either wrist. (Use any fingers other than your thumbs.)

If you can't feel your heartbeat on its own and need to use one of your hands to help you, see after a minute or two if you can feel your heartbeat without needing to use your hand. This would be best in the long run. If you find feeling your pulse difficult, then you will be well served by practicing over time, until you can sit quietly and feel your heartbeat pulsing through you. Sensing one's heartbeat is a primary technique used in many different health management systems for inducing greater body awareness, relaxation, and health.

Feel your heartbeat while just sitting quietly, either using your hands or not. You might notice some body movement. This is fine. Begin to notice your breath as well. Breathing in and breathing out through your nose. Feel your breath AND your heartbeat, and match the rhythm of the two. For example: Four heartbeats for the duration of the inhale and four heartbeats for the duration of the exhale. Keep your inhale and your exhale equal in length. This is rather important. As a second example: You might count your inhale for four heartbeats and then add a fifth beat as a pause or segue, prior to exhaling. Then count four heartbeats for the exhale, with an extra fifth beat as a pause or segue prior to inhaling.

You might find the duration or count of your breath changes from time to time. This is fine, and quite natural. For instance you might go from a four heartbeat count, to a three heartbeat count. Or you might go from a three heartbeat count to a five heartbeat count. Just be certain to adjust your breathing so that the inhalations and exhalations are once again of the same duration.

A minimum practice time would normally be five minutes, and you can do this practice in many different settings. On a train, bus, or plane. While a passenger in a car. Waiting in a reception room. Just prior to a test. You can take this practice with you wherever you go. If you are in a situation waiting for something to occur, you might likely find that even just one minute of this practice helps you to calm down.

Remember, when you calm your breathing you calm your body. When you calm your body, you calm your thinking and your internal dialogue. When you calm your body and your thinking, you calm your mind.

When measuring the duration of your heartbeat breath, it is important that you actually count your heartbeats and not just arbitrarily count at a predetermined pace. You are looking to meld the activity of your heart with the activity of the breath. After a while as you develop more experience with this practice you can just feel your heartbeats and no longer need to count.

To recap: Feel your heartbeat, and then synchronize your breath with your heartbeat. An inhale of say three heartbeats, a one heartbeat segue, and then a three heartbeat exhale with a one heartbeat segue. Nothing more to do than stay with this process and notice what you feel happening within your system. If you stay with this process for a few minutes you are likely to feel quite relaxed and at ease.

As simple as this Practice is, you might find it somewhat challenging in the beginning. If so, this will be a sign that it is important for you to take the time to delve more deeply into your personal rhythms.