

## *Practice Regulated Breathing - Minke de Vos*

Taoist Yoga teachings recommend long, full, regulated breathing. Oriental Breathing Therapies, like Pranayama and Chi Kung, have been time-tested for their energizing and healing effects on the body/mind.

### **Why not just practice “natural breathing”?**

When we breathe consciously, the breath changes from more stressful, uptight tendencies to fuller, whole body, natural breathing. The next stage would be to develop “super-natural breathing” with heightened awareness of the subtle flows, which connect us with the universe. When the mind, body and breath become one, insights happen spontaneously. By altering the breath length we induce altered states of concentrated absorption. When one’s meditation becomes deep, the breathing extends naturally, and the body/mind opens to a greater influx of power. This power breaks up stuck patterns, which can be held in our breathing habits. These changes are what we are afraid of. As we let go and “breathe through” the icy threshold of fear, the breath, body and mind will be liberated.

### **Why do some people say that controlled breathing practices are depleting for one’s energy?**

Oriental Medicine says that breathing practices like Rebirthing and Breath of Fire, done for an extended time can be depleting. These practices are good for venting or releasing stagnation, but done too long they can blow out good reserves. Circular Breathing and Breath Retention are internal breathing practices, like kidney packing and Iron Shirt Chi Kung. They induce the circulation of energy within the body, like the Microcosmic Orbit. Rather than limiting the speed of the chi flow to the breath rhythm, the chi is encouraged to flow freely. The slower and deeper the breath is, the faster the chi flows! The continuous stream builds concentration, which activates the Kundalini to rejuvenate the body and illuminate the mind.

### **Why extend the breath length?**

Extending the breath is like an internal stretching workout, which makes one more open and flexible. It creates more space to receive from the abundance of chi in the universe and builds a stronger reserve, which attracts it. Energy attracts energy. It is not meant to force oneself into a fixed pattern. But it is a paradoxical challenge, the deeper the focus, letting go and relaxation, the longer the breath becomes. The passageways for channelling the abundance of chi from the vast ocean of chi within become clearer. One feels nourished from inside and outside. When people breathe on their own without conscious regulation, their breathing tends to be shallower and more erratic. Shallow breathing can lead to health problems, like poor digestion. The upper mind may seem quiet with shallow breathing but the “mud” may have just settled to the bottom of the glass. Full breathing stirs up the mud and purifies it.

### **Why breathe rhythmically?**

When the breath is rhythmical the brainwave and heart rhythms become more coherent. Tense thoughts and emotions create irregular, chaotic patterns. Ordered breathing rhythms create a nest to surrender to spontaneous, chaotic, unpredictable chi rhythms: Yin within the Yang, effortless effort. The body-mind can be more harmonious and more at ease when given a temporary stable structure. Discipline breeds freedom.

### **Why practice with musical cues?**

Traditionally counting the seconds of the inhalation, hold and exhalation has regulated the breath. If one counts the mind is filled with numbers. Practicing with musical cues allows one to surrender to a full, rhythmical breath and frees one’s mind to practice the Inner Smile or contemplate our true nature. Surrendering to the breath and musical cues at the same time is like when you dance, you go with the music. When you surf you must ride the waves. The breath length is “controlled” through attention and finding more and more internal spaces to breathe life into. The more you relax, the more you can flow with whatever length you set the music to. Limitations will be felt and these boundaries can be softly pushed through. Gentle sound vibrations help the soul to relax and open to change.

Please try out our innovative tools to facilitate the development of “supernatural breathing”. See below. Let us know how you practice with this mysterious paradox of form and flow.

### **Yogic Breathing Programs**

Let your breathing surf on sound waves. Unique breath work unlocks the secrets of healing!

Progressive Breath Lengths allows you to advance step by step and stretch your limits.

Circular Breathing mobilizes energy circulation (22 tracks). Breath Retention builds internal power and focus (24 tracks). You are encouraged to challenge yourself and test out the length of your breathing, like having a private couch. Our breathing can vary from day to day, so you can go with the flow. The breath softly stretches you from within with smoothly gliding sounds.