

Butterfly Breathing

Level 1 / Posture 77

Benefits:

Wakes up breathing, clears toxins, oxygenates the body, loosens & strengthens shoulders, neck, chest, arms.

Time to Do: 1 - 3 minutes

Body Parts Used by This Posture: Lungs, chest, neck, shoulders, arms.

Build Up to This Posture with: Neck Stretches, Neck Rolls, Neck Press, Complete Breath, Wood Chopper, Chest Breathing 1, 2.

This Posture Builds You Up for: Great Breathing! Wood Chopper, Chest Breathing 1, 2;

Combines Well with: Lion, Neck Stretches, Neck Rolls, Neck Press, Complete Breath, Wood Chopper, Chest Breathing 1, 2.

Energy Center Used: Heart, Throat



Another great exercise that wakes up your breathing! This is an invigorating start to any routine. When done vigorously it oxygenates the body while clearing it of toxins, and loosens your shoulders and neck, chest for easier breathing throughout your routine and your day. It's a great way to release tension in the upper neck. Over time, when combined with the Lion, Butterfly Breathing can give relief from headaches by loosening the upper neck where it joins the skull.

Yoga Snack

Do this first thing in the morning for a great waker-upper and a wonderful start to your day. It's also a great way to quickly energize throughout the day.

Start

- Standing
- Head, neck and body lined up with each other
- Hands in Namaste (prayer position)



- See that you have a slight Pelvic Tilt. This will protect your lower back during the exhalation of this exercise.
- See that the back of your head, neck and back of your shoulders are lined up with each other.



Lace your fingers under your chin, palms facing downward, making a curved 'cup' that gently supports your chin. Put very slight pressure from your chin downward onto your fingers.

Key Have your chin facing forward so that the back of your throat is fully open. Experiment

with the placement of your chin until you feel maximum air flow at the back of your throat.



Key It's important that you do not jut your chin and neck forward during the first part of this exercise. Keep the back of your head, neck and shoulders in line with each other while you are breathing in.

Breathing in draw your elbows upward. Notice how this lifts your chest up, opening up your air passages.



Key The more you can lift your elbows upward, the more your chest will open, the more air you can draw in.

Pause



Breathing out, lower your elbows while balling your hands into a fist.

Still breathing out, press your chin up and back, encouraging your chin to stretch and your neck to stretch backward.

Keep your elbows together while you do this part of the exercise.

Tip Use your hands fists to gently coax your chin up and back, but don't push or force the movement.





Key Take your time breathing out. As you breathe out more and more, notice that you can stretch your neck and chin back more and more. This will encourage the back of your neck to release.

Pause

Breathing in return to face forward, with your fingers laced under your chin and your back to the first part of the exercise.



Repeat as many times as you like.

3 – 6 times is good. 15 times is great!

Note, this exercise is surprisingly demanding on the upper neck. Build up to more repetitions with 1 or 2 extra reps at a time.

Modifications

To make it easier: If the pose works your neck too hard you might be pressing down on your hands too much during the first part of the exercise. Ease up and it can go easier. Then, to build strength and flexibility in your neck, concentrate on having long exhalations with gentle coaxing from your fists.

To make it harder, press more firmly on your hands during the inhalation. Draw your elbows up to their maximum height while you're breathing in. Aim for extreme backward movement of the neck and chin during the exhalations.