

Benefits:

Strengthens muscles in the front of the rib cage; encourages fuller breathing; increases awareness of breathing; gives better air exchange and clears out waste out of the body.

Body Parts Used by This Posture: Front of Rib Cage

Use for this Pose: Spot Training for Breathing Muscles

Try Warming Up with: Complete Breath 1; or Complete Breath 2; Bust Expansion; Chest Expansion; Posture Clasp; Back Bend; Cobra; Sun Salutation

Good Before: Any yoga session

Good After: Any yoga session. Also good after or during a long hard day!

Builds you up for: Breathing with the whole body; Postures that require strength in the chest, such as Bust Expansion, Chest Expansion, Posture Clasp, Back Bend, Cobra, Sun Salutation

Energy Center Used: Heart center

Try Learning First: Abdominal Breathing; Complete Breath 1; Complete Breath 2; Bust Expansion



Most new yoga students breathe shallowly and quickly, using only their upper chest. To take a really deep breath, you need to open up the entire rib cage, including all the muscles at the front of the rib cage, right down to the last rib before your belly. This exercise will help you become more aware of the entire front of your rib cage and will develop the muscles there, which, by now, may have become sluggish and weakened from lack of use. It will also give you more control so that you will be able to pace your breathing and slow it down by the time you get to Yellow Level.

Yoga Snack

Try this exercise any time you're stuck in traffic; waiting for buses or elevators; do this next time you're in a bank line up; try during lunch breaks, or while you're on hold on the phone.

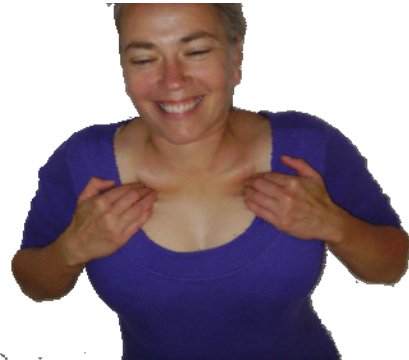
For audio instructions and to practice this pose along with Corinne, go to www.audioyoga.com/ChestBreathing1.htm

Start

Sitting, standing or lying down.
Have your neck and spine lined up with each other; chin pointing forward.

Put your finger tips of your right hand on the bump in the middle of your right collar bone.

Put your finger tips of your left hand on the bump in the middle of your left collar bone.



Slide your fingers down, off your collar bone, to the hollow spots just under the collar bone bumps. Leave your fingers resting there for this exercise.

Discovery

For 1 – 3 minutes

As you breathe in an out, notice the rise and fall of your rib cage around your finger tips. You don't need to exaggerate the motion or work at this in any way. Just notice which muscles are working, stretching open, to what degree they're feeling loose, where they're tight, etc. Notice how the motion starts at the sternum and radiates outward from there.

Next

For 1 – 3 minutes

Breathe in, stretching your rib cage toward your fingers. Take full, deep breaths. Feel the rib cage really stretching toward the fingers. See how many muscles you can feel stretching. Keep breathing and stretching, until you can notice the entire front of the rib cage stretching open. Until you have a really deep breath!

Breathing out, let the rib cage collapse away from your fingers. Feel the shoulders collapsing with them. Feel the sternum collapsing inward.

Pause and repeat for 1 – 3 minutes.

Tip If you get dizzy, pause longer after breathing in or after breathing out. Or take a break in between breaths, and breathe “normally”, until you're ready to do this again.