

Benefits:

Strengthens abdominals, entire chest and torso; encourages fuller breathing; increases awareness of breathing, gives better air exchange and clears out waste out of the body.

Time to Do: 10 seconds – 5 minutes. (As long as you'd like!)

Body Parts Used by This Posture: Abdominals, lower back, front of chest, back of chest, sides of chest

Try Warming up with: Abdominal Lifts; Abdominal Breathing; Chest Breathing 1; Chest Breathing 2; Sun Salutation 1, 2, 3, 4; Bust Expansion; Chest Expansion; Back Bend 1, 2, 3; Cat Stretch 1, 2; Puppy 1, 2.

This Posture is Good Before: Yoga Sessions; relaxation; bed

Good After: Yoga Sessions

Energy Center Used: Belly, Solar Plexus, Chest, Throat

Try Learning First: Abdominal Breathing, Chest Breathing 1, Chest Breathing 2, Sacral Breathing



This exercise will have you breathing with your whole body. This is a big change from the shallow, upper chest breathing that many people do. You'll improve the air exchange, getting more oxygen and releasing more toxins each time you breathe in and out. You'll become generally more relaxed and focused. Research is showing that this will improve your immune system and that this kind of full breathing may even help prevent heart attacks. Spot train like this for a few moments each day and you'll soon be breathing more fully throughout the day.

Difference from Abdominal Breathing, Chest Breathing 1 & Chest Breathing 2 & Sacral Breathing: These three exercises build up the muscles and skills you'll need to do the complete *Wave* – breathing with your entire body. I highly recommend you learn them first, then the *Wave* will come more naturally.

The Wave™ (Continued)

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; while you're lying in bed. This can be done anywhere for any length of time. The more you do it, the better you'll be at it! Once you've mastered it, keep on practicing it to keep the benefits.

Tip I call this breathing exercise *The Wave* because it simulates a wave flowing up to the shore and then retreating. When you get the feel of breathing with your whole body, the rhythm of the breath is much like the rhythm of a wave: the breath starts in the belly, rises up to the chest, spreads out to the sides of the chest, spread across your lower back and then retreats – the chest collapses and the abdominals drop.

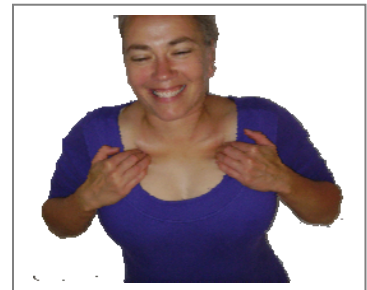
Step 1 - Start with this Warm Up

It's highly recommended for people learning The Wave



Abdominal & Sacral Breathing for 1 minutes.
Then relax and breathe normally for a moment.

Chest Breathing 1 for 1 minute.
Then relax and breathe normally for a moment.



Chest Breathing 2
for 1 minute.
Then relax
and breathe normally
for a moment.

Back Breathing
for 1 minute.
Then relax
and breathe normally
for a moment.



The Wave™ (Continued)

Learning the Basics of *The Wave*

You'll warm up by doing a few breaths with each move of the Wave being very deliberate and exaggerated. This will wake up your breathing muscles and help you become aware of each part of your body and its role in your breath.

Then you're ready to practice The Wave.

- Begin by lying comfortably.
- Have your legs, hips, shoulders, neck and head lined up with each other.
- Place one hand on your belly and one on the front of your chest; (this will give you something to aim toward as you open up your body).

To Breathe In



Begin each breath as you would with abdominal breathing:

Draw your belly open to start the breath

Breathing toward your hand there.

Feel your belly softly rising.

Feel your lower back spreading gently open as your sacrum loosens to welcome the breath.

Once this breath is about half to 2/3 full, hold your movement and begin the chest motions:



Then open up the front of your chest (as in *Chest Breathing 1*)

Once this movement is about 2/3 full, focus on the sides of your chest:



Open up the **sides of your chest** (as in *Chest Breathing 2*)

Then complete your breath by feeling your upper back spread open.



Tip

Make your breaths about 2/3 full and about 2/3 empty. (No need to push your limit yet.)

The Wave™ (Continued)

After breathing in, pause, gently holding your breath, briefly.

To Breathe Out

- Let your chest drop.
- Once your chest is part way through sinking down allow your abdominals to drop.
 - **When you are improving your skills in this practice, follow this last motion with by actively drawing your abdominals inward, pressing more air out.**

Pause.

This completes one *Wave* breath.

While you are learning the movements, take a short break after each *Wave* breath and breathe however you like for a moment. Then do another *Wave*.

Continue for 1 to 3 minutes.

Practicing the continuous Wave

Once you are comfortable with *The Wave* from Step 2, you can try practicing it continuously, without breaks for “normal” breathing in between. This can be confusing at first. If you get muddled, stop, do a few normal breaths and try again. Or you might like to go back to Step 1 and practice the steps individually for a while.

As you get proficient at *The Wave*, you do not need to do Steps 1 & 2 to warm up.

Tip Just like any muscle groups, your breathing muscles need regular work outs to stay in shape. If, once you’ve mastered *The Wave*, you stop spot training your breathing, your muscles can get sloppy again and lose their strength, tone and rhythm. Use it as breaks in your daily life. This will keep you in practice. You will gain a lot of health benefits from doing it every day, whenever you can.

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