

## BREATHING

Breathing can be voluntary or involuntary. We can regulate our breathing consciously or forget about it and still continue to breathe. This characteristic of breathing plays an important role in controlling and managing stress.

Most of us tend to breathe shallowly with the upper two thirds of the lungs as opposed to diaphragm breathing. By breathing in the upper chest, we will average 16 to 20 breaths per minute. In a 24 hour period, chronic chest breathers will inhale 22,000-25,000 times, while diaphragm breathers will take only 10,000-12,000 breaths.

Even though there is no difference in the amount of oxygen consumed by the body, imagine the work required by the lungs. And rapid, shallow chest breathing causes the heart to accelerate. This can be quite taxing on the heart. By breathing deeply (diaphragmatic breathing), you can immediately accommodate the overworked heart by getting your body into a relaxed state.

After some weeks you will begin to notice subtle changes in your daily breathing patterns. The movement will be more relaxed and rhythmic. This leads to a greater efficiency of both the heart and lungs, thus reducing the amount of work required for proper breathing.

## PRACTICE

Before you go to sleep and just after waking up, practice the following...

Place your right hand on your upper abdomen, with the little finger directly above the navel and the fingers spread so that the thumb is almost touching the chest. Place your left hand on the upper chest with the little finger between the two breasts. As you breathe, concentrate on the air moving down into the upper abdomen (as if you are filling your stomach with breath). The right hand should rise with the inhalation and fall with the exhalation; the left hand should not move. You should feel a slight motion in the lower portion of the chest cavity, but the upper portion should remain still. Within a few minutes you will become more rested and quiet. Try not to force the breath.

Relaxation technique taken from, Freedom from Stress, by Phil Nuernberger, PhD.

## SALT

High salt intake is often cited as a cause of hypertension, although some feel that it becomes a factor only when taken in large amounts by those already disposed toward high blood pressure.

Most people pour entirely too much salt on food. You can get plenty of sodium from foods containing natural mineral salts - uncooked fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Food containing a lot of sodium should be avoided by anyone with a tendency toward high blood pressure. In addition to table salt beware of catsups, cold meats, canned

## eat well

Calorie-for-calorie, tofu compares favorably with other protein foods. It is high in protein, thiamine, and other nutrients, while low in saturated fat and sodium, and entirely free of cholesterol.

	TOFU	Meat	Milk	Eggs
Protein	108	85	53	78
Thiamine	83	31	45	49
Iron	26	11	2	13
Saturated Fat	14	35	30	24
Sodium	10	16	76	166
Cholesterol	0	24	17	337

The figures in this table are based on the concept of "nutrient density", i.e. they give the amounts of nutrients provided by an equal number of calories of each food.

### CREAMY TOFU DIP OR DRESSING

$\frac{1}{2}$  lb. tofu, cut up  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 TBS lemon juice  
3 TBS salad oil  
•seasonings: pepper, minced onion, minced garlic, salad herbs like parsley, basil, or chives

Blend first four ingredients plus 2-3 seasonings until smooth (or mash together and let sit for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr.). Add water a little at a time, thinning to desired consistency. Use as a dip for vegetables or chips (unsalted), as a spread for whole wheat crackers, or spoon over salads. Makes about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups.