

Spinal breath

For relaxation, this practice is best done lying on your back in shavasana, the corpse posture.

- Exhale as though you are breathing from the top of the head down to the perineum at the base of the spine.
- Inhale as though you are breathing from the perineum at the base of the spine, up to the top of the head.
- Exhale and inhale many times in this way, exhaling down and inhaling up.
- Imagine that the breath is flowing in a thin, milky white stream from top to bottom, and bottom to top. It does not matter whether or not you literally see the stream with your inner eye, but know that this stream of energy is actually there in the subtle body, and will someday be experienced directly.

Navel center with Spinal breath

This practice is also done lying on your back, in shavasana, the corpse posture. It combines breath awareness at the navel center with the spinal breath practice.

- Bring your attention to the navel center, and notice the motion of the abdomen and diaphragm area. Notice the physical rise and fall of the abdomen.
- Stay with that breath awareness for some time, being mindful that the breath is smooth, with no jerks, no pauses between breaths, that it is quiet, and that the speed is just the right degree of slow.
- After some time, allow the exhalation to elongate to a 2-to-1 ratio, where the exhalation is twice as long as the inhalation.
- Stay with this breath awareness for some time, and then, when it feels right, transition to the spinal breath.
- Allow the breath to become ever slower and slower, but in a natural, gentle way, keeping the mind focused on the practice.
- Exhale as though you are breathing from the top of the head down to the perineum at the base of the spine.
- Inhale as though you are breathing from the perineum at the base of the spine, up to the top of the head.
- Exhale and inhale many times in this way, exhaling down and inhaling up.
- Imagine that the breath is flowing in a thin, milky white stream from top to bottom, and bottom to top.