

Insomnia Relief by 'Counting Breaths'

Here is a simple and proven method for inducing sleep. Try it when your doctor says there is no obvious disease. It may substitute sleeping pills. 'Counting Breaths' works amazingly for all ages – 8 to 93 years. How can you do it?

Lie down in your usual position. Close your eyes. Follow these 3 easy steps.

1.In-breath: During the in-breath, sense the naturally present faint coolness inside your nose. This coolness is always present. We do not notice it. Focusing on this coolness is calming and relaxing.

2.Out-Breath: During the out-breath, slowly count in your mind 'one-one' so on. You may count one or more times, and the count may vary at different times. Don't try to regulate breathing. Let it happen in any manner.

3.Next in-breath: Enjoy the relaxing coolness inside the nose again (don't count during the in-breaths). **Next out-breath:** Count the next number 'two-two' so on. **Repeat this pattern:** Feel the coolness during the in-breaths and count the next number during the out-breaths. Keep on doing this.

What will happen? At some number, your mind wanders and forgets about coolness and counting. For some beginners this may happen even before reaching five. It's OK. Relax! Every time you forget counting, repeat the above steps 1 - 2 - 3. Your tense muscles will gradually loosen inducing sleep. You will be amazed how this works!

What if you don't get sleep quickly?

The maximum time needed for onset of sleep is about 20 minutes. If you don't sleep within this time, don't panic. Try the advanced method. *Advanced Method:* Pretend that you are not the person struggling to sleep, but a scientist doing an experiment, on the side effects of 'Counting Breaths'. Continue feeling the coolness of in-breaths and counting during the out-breaths. If you happen to count up to hundred, restart from one. Repeat the one to hundred counts. Your mind is thus very busy with this experiment, with no time to think about sleep. What will happen? The muscles all over your body will gradually loosen and you, the scientist will doze off, forgetting the experiment!

If you wake up mid sleep, 'Count your Breaths' and get back to sound sleep. See how you feel fresher than before, when you wake up! **Say 'Bye-Bye' to Insomnia!**

Beyond quality sleep....

Count a few breaths during the idle or wandering moments of your mind, throughout the day: waiting anywhere, traveling in car/ train/ air plane or walking any place. Also during

the stressful times: feeling angry, sad, frustrated, tired....so on. In a few months, your mind will automatically focus on the breath sensation as needed and periodically and relax your mind and body. This relaxed state will reflect in your face with a happy smile! You can see such pictures in the web site www.countingbreaths.com If you have any problems like Hypertension, Migraine, Smoking or Tobacco chewing, Anger, Obesity, Insomnia, Stuttering or Difficult relationships, you will gain significant relief. See the extensive feedback from practitioners of all ages is in the above web site.

Alternative Methods to develop Breath Awareness for Relaxation (instead of counting). You can also try these options and use them as you like in combination with 'counting breaths' or by themselves.

a) Simply feel the breath sensations: Don't count during the out-breath. Just feel the sensations of coolness during in-breath and the non-cool sensation during the out-breath. Focus on the difference between these two sensations. This option is handy for taking refreshing breath breaks even while doing some work.

b) Tracking breaths using fingers: In this option, we do not count at all. We use the finger segments to keep track of every breath.

- To begin, keep the tip of the thumb in the top segment of the little finger of any hand. Watch one breath flow in and out. Then move the thumb tip to the middle segment of the same finger. Watch the second breath flow in and out. Next, move the thumb tip to the bottom segment of the little finger and watch the third breath.

- Then move the thumb tip to the adjacent finger and watch the next 3 breaths using its 3 segments. Move to its adjacent fingers and repeat the steps till you complete the index finger. When it is the turn of the thumb, place the tip of the index finger on the 3 segments of the thumb, one at a time. Note that you do not count the breaths in this mode.

- Now, switch to the other hand and repeat the process. After completing the second hand, switch back to the first hand. Continue in this fashion.

- Try this option specially when you wake up, still lying under the cover and your body is not willing to get off the bed. Your hands, fingers, legs, toes and shoulders may be stiff or numb. By the time you complete 6-8 hands on the above pattern, you will feel the gradual loosening of the stiff muscles all over the body. Continue doing this, lying down, till all the muscles in fingers, toes, shoulders and face become loose, relaxed and pain-free on movement. Change your body posture a few times during his practice. This may take 30 to 45 minutes or more. On week ends, don't bother about time. Go by the body condition. Continue, till all the parts of your body feel soft, flexible and pain free when moved. Then, get out of the bed. You will feel then feel as if you got a fresh body, so different from what it was just an hour ago. What a wonderful condition of body and mind to begin the day!

c) Silently saying soothing words: We do not count in this option, but use some soothing words during in and out breaths. For example: during the in-breath sensed by the coolness, say silently "Breathing in, I calm myself". During the out-breath, say silently "Breathing out, I smile". Continue this process. Your muscles will gradually soften and go limp!

Try the above options and use one or more of them, before sleep, on waking up and all other times of the day without spending your useful time.

Suryanarayana Chennapragada teaches 'Counting Breaths' and complementary methods for 'Relaxation and Stress Reduction', to all ages 5 to 93 years. His web site www.countingbreaths.com explains them in a simple manner. You will be able to practice on your own and derive significant benefits for Mind, Body and Relationships, without spending time or money!