
Breathing

1st Degree Paper for *The Historia Illius Itineris*

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The Dolphin Breath and Other Respiratory Oddities

Purpose: *Representation in the metaphoric experiential field is proprioceptive and mapped out physically in space. The following breathing techniques help develop a specific type of trance that differs from a conventional deep relaxation/hypnotic trance and facilitates better exploration of the metaphoric environment.*

The dolphin breath exercise is attributed to John C. Lilly, an explorer of interspecies communications and altered states of consciousness, famed for his LSD and dolphin experiments and the development of the sensory deprivation “floatation” tanks. It is highly recommended that you read John C Lilly's books, “*The Centre of The Cyclone*” and its follow up “*The Dyadic Cyclone*.”

It should be noted for ethical reasons dolphins are not to be used in these exercises and for reasons of sanity and law, LSD and any related substance are to be avoided for this exercise.

Intentional breathing exercises have a long history throughout the world and form an integral aspect of mystical and spiritual development in many traditions. The benefits that are claimed for intentional breathing range from control of bodily functions and the autonomic nervous system, the induction and control of altered states of consciousness and numerous positive health improvements. It is probable that many of the health claims that are made are rather lacking in supporting evidence.

The yogi who are able to demonstrate the extraordinary physical abilities developed through the practice of “pranayama” and its related disciplines can only do so after many years of daily practice which often last for hours at a time.

Now, needless to say, if you suffer respiratory disease, have a heart condition, malignant hypertension or any other condition that may cause your death whilst performing these exercises then it is requested by *The Historia Illius Itineris (HII)* that you refrain from doing so during *HII* meetings.

The First Oddity

How to hold your breath like a champion (also known as, “*How to Show Off At Parties and Not Be Invited Back*”)

This is a simple trick known by breath holding champions. It typically enables the ordinary person to hold their breathe easily for 1-2 minutes without difficulty and without prior hyperventilation.

Take one deep breath in as far as you can go, breathe out quickly then breath in again and hold. Whilst holding your breathe mentally swear. Swear a lot and do so loudly in your mind. Just keep swearing, don't stop, just keep it going. What you will discover is that whereas as swearing out loud would require you to take a regular breath, with mental swearing such as this, obviously you don't need to take such a breath. With this realisation, you will surprise yourself at just how long you can comfortably hold your breath for.

The Second Oddity – Control of The Nasal Cycle

This is an old yogic practice and that been adopted by many esoteric traditions and has some firm evidential scientific basis behind it. It involves alternating your breathing through each nostril.

Basically and simply it works like this. The chambers above each nostril can dilate and contract. You can control this movement with a very simple act of will. You may have found that when you are completely bunged up with a cold, by thinking of your nasal chambers, you can temporarily clear one of them.

Here's the entry from Wikipedia on the subject:

In 1927 Heetderks spoke about the alternating turgescence of the inferior turbinates in 80% of a normal population. The cycle is the result of alternating congestion and decongestion of the turbinates, predominantly the inferior turbinates, which are by far the largest of the turbinates in each nasal fossa. Turbinates consist of bony projections covered by erectile tissue, much like the tissues of the penis and clitoris. The turbinates in one fossa filled up with blood while the opposite turbinates decongested by shunting blood away. This cycle, which is controlled by the autonomic nervous system as described above, had a mean duration of two and a half hours. He further observed and documented that the turbinates in the dependent nasal fossa filled when the patient was in the lateral decubitus (lying down on your side) position. Some postulate that this alternating positional obstruction has the purpose of causing a person to turn from one side to the other while sleeping. Others note that the asymmetric airflow may have some benefit to overall olfactory sensitivity. It has been shown that the cilia of the congested side suspend their motility until that side decongests. Thus the cycle ensures that one side of the nose is always moist, to facilitate humidification, which is one of the three functions of the nose, the other two being filtration and warming of inspired air prior to its entering the lungs. The nasal cycle is an alternating one, with the total resistance in the nose remaining constant. In patients with a fixed septal deviation and intermittent nasal obstruction, the interplay of the nasal cycle becomes evident; the sensation of obstruction frequently mirrors the congestion phase.

Control of this cycle can be achieved quite readily and with it one can readily begin to control mood and the body's ultradian rhythm, the 90 minute Basic Rest and Activity Cycle (BRAC) outlined in depth by Ernest Rossi in his books.

Practice breathing normally through the nose, except on the in-breathe close the left nostril with your finger/thumb, and on the out-breath, release that left nostril and close the right nostril. So, in through the left, out through the right.

Do this for approximately 5-10 minutes.

You will notice it feels strange when you stop doing this owing to the temperature differences between the nostrils.

Repeat the exercise, but the other way around, i.e. in through the right nostril, out through the left.

As you do the exercise, pay careful attention to the sensations in the nasal chambers.

The Third Oddity and Trying Not to Drown

By gaining control over body and state, a much greater depth of metaphoric exploration is possible. It also enables a longer time inside the metaphor to locate many details that are otherwise outside of the normal level of consciousness and awareness.

The dolphin breath comes from the observation that when upright in fresh water, a person takes a really deep breath in will float, as they breath out they quickly sink.

Thus the dolphin breath involves being upright in water that is deeper than you are tall, taking a fast and really deep breath in, holding, then rapidly breathing out as far as one can go before taking a rapid breath back in again before you sink.

With practice and deep relaxation of the body, this exercise rapidly becomes easier with the in-breath being held for ever increasing lengths of time. John C. Lilly suggested such an exercise would help get a person into the mind of a dolphin. That part is entirely optional.

The Hisoria Illius Itineris humbly request that participants refrain from drowning during this exercise.

The “Instant Sleep” Technique

This technique has been spread around the internet recently as a technique for falling asleep “instantly”. This technique lends itself well to creating the altered state of conscious that is useful for our purposes in exploring metaphor and enables a greater depth of exploration.

It is recommended that this exercise is used for a few minutes prior to metaphor exploration.

Position: lying supine, head and legs supported with pillows as required.

Breath in slowly for a count of 8.

Hold the breath* for a count of 7.

Breathe out quickly to a count of 4.

Repeat

Ideally the counting speed is constant and the breathing rate is changed to keep pace. It may take some experimentation to find the correct rhythm for you.

*when holding the breath, do not close the epiglottis, but rather hold the breath in such a way that should someone press lightly on your diaphragm, then air would be readily expelled.