

## BREATH

(Natural Cycle, Rhythmic, Extended)

Begin laying on the floor in an X shape – with arms and legs stretched out long and straight.

Focus on the breath – envision the breathing action being centered in the pelvis and allow the breath cycle to become slow and deep.

As you inhale, feel as though you are filling and expanding the whole body with the breath. As you exhale, feel the body gradually emptying.

Visualize the body being like a helium balloon – as you inhale, the expansion causes you to feel lighter, almost floating. As you exhale, the balloon deflates and causes you to descend – take a moment to feel the body's full weight before inhaling and floating again.

Once a regular, slow, deep breath cycle has been established with this imagery, and feels comfortable in the body, begin to manifest this imagery in physical response.

Starting with the inhalation in the pelvis, expand outwards down the legs, up the arms and also up into the head – reach and stretch the limbs directly out from the center, still keeping the X shape, with a feeling of an inflating, floating balloon.

Then, as you exhale, imagine your body as a gradually deflating balloon, gently sinking back to earth and relax.

From here, begin exploring the idea of inhaling into different parts of the torso (for example: the top of the chest, one side of the rib-cage, the center of the back, the front of one hip.) Then exhale back into the X shape again.

Progress on to also inhaling into the limbs and then extremities of the body (a knee, a hand, the back of the head).

As you continue, instead of always “deflating” back to the X shape, begin to explore where you end up if you melt straight down organically from your fully expanded position. Once fully exhaled and deflated, this is your new position to inhale and expand from.

All this is executed as a response to the full, natural cycle of the breath – inhaling and exhaling deeply and evenly - with perhaps a very slight burst of initiation at the start of each inhalation.

(Note: There should be NO collapse on the exhalation – allow the body to respond to the natural gradual dispelling of air from the lungs. It will require a little muscular control.)

Now you can begin to work your way up, using the “helium balloon” imagery to assist against gravity. Also find ways of coming to a deflated state of rest without necessarily arriving back down on the floor each time.

#### ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT – Rhythmic and Extended use of breath

Introducing Rhythmic use of breath into this exercise is a playful way of exploring the power of the breath in its affect on movement. Experiment with affecting the rhythmical structure of the breath. Play with tempo and phrasing, perhaps a series of rapid exhalations, or holding the breath. Be disciplined about keeping the integrity of the original exercise and follow through with full body commitment to expansion and deflation with this erratic breathing style.

In contrast to Rhythmical, the Extended use of breath aids sustained motion. Instead of needing to deflate on each exhalation, Extended breath allows a gesture to continue and evolve through the exhalation so that a seamless progression of sustained motion can be achieved, aided and supported by the breath.

#### INTENTIONS:

The breath is probably the most vital function of the body that can be tapped into for its influence on movement.

In this exercise, the breath is the sole motivating factor of all motion that occurs. My intention is for the conscious use of breath to facilitate organic movement responses in the body. This connection with the breath also develops a heightened sense of plasticity in the resulting gestures and forms.

This exercise also seeks to develop a sense of full expansion of the body in space, as well as experiencing the opposite extreme of emptiness, deflation and release.