

...A courtesy practice written by Ginger Garner MPT, ATC...an imprint of Elemental Renewal & Living Well, Inc.

Sandbag Breathing

Intention

1. Decrease sympathetic input for relaxation effect
2. Decrease hyperventilation
3. Normalize respiration
4. Equalize inhalation and exhalation cycles
5. Relaxation
6. Teach abdominal (diaphragmatic)
7. Deepen respiration



Sandbag breathing shown laying on back

Starting Position – laying on back in bed, on a yoga mat, or in a reclined position as shown in day one (three tier approach)

Props needed – sandbag, 2-4 blankets as needed to stack into an inclined position

Action

Entry – place the sandbag over the lower abdomen, on and below the navel, below the ribs and above the pelvis, approximately. Breathe steadily and slowly, feeling the rise of the sandbag on the inhale and the steady descent of the sandbag on the exhale.

Exit – Remove the sandbag by dragging it off the belly to the left side. Remain here and notice any changes. After several breath cycles, transition to right sidelying, then to seated meditation. Spend several breath cycles in seated meditation to center and notice any changes.

Tips

1. Use a lighter weight than a sandbag. Simply begin with the hands clasped over the belly instead of using a weight. Then, move to a heavy book.
2. Incline the pose if you cannot remain flat on your back secondary to aches and pains, pregnancy, asthma or allergies, or acid reflex, for example.
3. Support the lumbar spine with a rolled blanket under the knees.
4. Place a graded incline of blankets under the trunk to assist with ease of breathing (i.e. respiratory difficulties, allergies)
5. Pregnancy or postpartum should just rest as in no. 2 and 4 WITH NO SANDBAG.

WARNINGS – Do not use a sandbag with this breath or lie flat if you have had: abdominal surgeries or hernias, anxiety which could lead to panic attacks from the restriction that the sandbag initially places on the breath; pregnancy; postpartum; stomach ulcers or hyperacidity; heart disease or stroke.