

8. Oscillating your chest and abdomen- sitting

This body warm-up can also be done while lying on your back with your knees bent and feet standing as in audio lesson number 5. For some, this position will be easier at first than while sitting. You may also repeat this body warm-up during your practice session if you feel your breathing becomes tight or restricted.

1. Sit so that your back and pelvis are free from the back of the chair. Have your feet resting fully on the floor and a comfortable distance apart from each other. Make sure your knees are over your feet so that your lower legs are roughly perpendicular to the floor. If your feet do not easily rest on the floor then sit a bit more forward on the chair.
2. Notice the feeling of ease breathing into your abdomen and then into your chest. Does your abdomen feel freer than your chest or your chest freer than your abdomen? Perhaps they feel about the same.
3. Place one hand on your breastbone and the other on your belly over your belly button (see visual cue from audio lesson 5). With your hands, feel the movement of your belly and your chest. Make sure your hands are soft and light so they do not interfere with your breathing.
4. Breathe now so that you move the hand on your belly more than the hand on your chest. Repeat this for several breaths and then go back to breathing the way you were before.
5. Now breathe so that the hand on your chest moves more than the hand on your belly. You may have to gently restrict the movement in your belly in order for your chest to move more. Repeat this several times and then rest your hands on your thighs.
6. While resting your hands, notice the feeling of ease while breathing. Has your belly become freer, your chest, both?
7. Place your hands once again on your chest and abdomen. You may switch your hands if you like. Breathe in about two-thirds to three quarters of your full capacity and hold your breath. While holding your breath, begin to push the air down into your belly and then up into your chest. You may use your hands to gently guide the movements of your belly and chest. Make sure you are not arching your lower back as you push the air down into your belly. Repeat this several times and then exhale. Take a few regular breaths and repeat the above process several times. Rest your hands on your thighs.
8. Placing your hands again on your chest and belly, begin to take in air and hold your breath. Oscillate pushing the air into your chest and into your belly. Begin to experiment with the rhythm of the oscillations. Try a few very slowly and then a few more quickly. You may find a rhythm that works easiest for you. While experimenting with different speeds, make sure you exhale and rest for a few breaths before you feel short of breath. Continue experimenting as long as is interesting and then rest your hands again.