

1 - Tummo Breathing : How to do it:

1. Sit comfortably with good posture and close your eyes. Your hands will rest over your stomach for the entirety of the practice. (Note: Once you become more acquainted with the practice, it can be done standing or walking.)
2. Begin to relax your mind as best you can, allowing thoughts to flow until your mind has quieted.
3. Visualize a fire in your stomach around your belly button. Imagine you are a large hollow balloon with this ball of fire inside. Continue visualizing throughout the practice.
4. Inhale deeply through your nose, arching your back slightly, expanding your torso and chest. Imagine the oxygen is fueling the fire within you, helping it to grow larger and hotter.
5. Exhale strongly through your mouth with rounded lips, as if you were blowing through a straw. Curl forward, rounding the spine, still holding your hands to your stomach. Imagine the flame and its heat are spreading all throughout your body.
6. Continue this breath pattern for five breaths and notice the heat start to build. After the fifth inhale, swallow gently and feel how that holds the inhale below the diaphragm. Contract your pelvic floor muscles, so you're simultaneously pushing the breath down with the diaphragm and up with the pelvic floor.
7. Exhale after holding the breath for as long as you can, relaxing your muscles.
8. Repeat the sequence for a few rounds, and you should start to feel warmer and more mentally clear.

2 - What is Tummo meditation

Let's start with a little history about Tummo breathing. Tummo is a Tibetan meditation technique that is mentioned in sacred texts dating back to the 8th century. Back then, Tummo meant heat. The ancient monks used Tummo to raise their body temperature. Due to high altitudes, temperatures in the Tibetan mountains often drop below zero. The Tummo breathing method makes it possible to relax and focus when it is extremely cold. The practice of Tummo breathing emerged in response to this challenge, as its main purpose is to warm up the body and awaken its inner fire.

But how, you probably wonder. There have been several studies that confirm that Tummo can raise body temperature. The Tibetan monks wore only basic woolen robes and were sleeping outdoors, directly on the cold rocks. In Tibet, temperatures can drop to -17 degrees Celsius, yet the monks slept like babies. Later on, in a magnetic resonance study, they found out that during meditation, the monks had an unusual blood flow in the brain area. They concluded that this allowed the brain to take over body functions like temperature and metabolism. Tummo breathing can deepen the connection between your mind and body. Besides that, it helps to treat stress-related conditions, such as high blood pressure, insomnia, depression, and anxiety.

Benefits of Tummo breathing

Besides raising your body temperature, Tummo breathing has more benefits and purposes. From our view, the main thing about Tummo breathing is a deeper appreciation of the mind-body connection and the power of thought. It can give us a healthier stress response, which gives our immune system a boost. The breathing exercises of Tummo can also tone up the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve is responsible for controlling the correct functioning of several organs. And besides that, if done regularly, Tummo breathing can bring many more benefits, such as better core stability, increased tolerance for exercises, and reduced risk of muscle injury.

Practice Tummo meditation

If you already practice meditation techniques, Tummo meditation is worth a try, as it is a good way to reduce stress and protect your wellbeing. The Tummo breathing technique relies on a mix of breathing and visualization exercises. The basic idea is to stir up your internal energy through a series of breathing exercises and visualizations so that 'psychic heat' becomes real heat.

To start with, sit in a comfortable position and exhale forcefully to clear any stagnant energy from the lungs.

- Bring your hands together and rub them energetically.
- Place your warm hands over each other on your navel.
- Inhale deeply while pulling your shoulders back, expanding your rib cage.
- Exhale loudly and bring your shoulders forward.
- Repeat this inhale-exhale 3 or 4 times.
- For a few seconds, switch to gentle breathing.
- Start again with inhaling deeply.
- Hold your breath a few seconds while keeping your shoulders square.
- Exhale, relax your shoulders, and push your abdomen out.
- Repeat this inhale-exhale 2 or 3 times.
- For a few seconds, switch to gentle breathing.
- Repeat the first sequence 5 times.
- When you exhale for the last time, hold your breath for 2 seconds, and then exhale slowly.

The monks in Tibet use visualization exercises to further raise their body temperature. The main technique is to focus on key parts of your body and concentrating on warmth and visualizations of flames or fire.