

Dynamic BREATHING



for a dynamic career

TODAY'S DYNAMIC ESTHETICIANS AND spa professionals are continually looking for ways to improve themselves, and subsequently their work environments. Many professionals take advanced classes in their area of expertise, and in doing so expand their skill set. That is all well and good, but what happens if you forget the basics? What happens if you are filled to the brim with knowledge, but can't apply what you know because you are stressed out? Stress

come grounded and centered. Breathing techniques involve removing attention from turmoil in the mind, focusing on the breath and bringing awareness into the body. A greater sense of peace, relaxation and overall well-being may be experienced through the regular practice of focused breathing.

This article covers some common stressful work situations, along with tips on how to use your breath to get through them.

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and aggravating situations are a part of life. When you are tense, frightened or angry, you hold your breath. These internalized emotions can be passed along to your clients through touch, and obviously are counterproductive in the healing arts world.

As a yoga practitioner and esthetic instructor of 10 years, I have discovered that deliberate, focused breathing is an incredibly effective way to induce a relaxed state of mind and body. When you practice your basic skills with the addition of breath awareness, every aspect of your job and life take a turn for the better. As you learn to use your breath, you become more aware of yourself, and that simple awareness spills over into your work. By using your breath, you become more in control of any stressful situation. Research has shown that your heart rate, blood pressure and even your body temperature can be affected by how you breathe. By supplying your body with a constant and plentiful source of oxygen and exhaling more completely, dangerous toxins are expelled, which benefits your entire body. Practicing relaxation techniques such as focused breathing is a great way to be-

The urge to complain

We all have negative opinions about certain aspects of our jobs, but keep yours to yourself. Neither your boss nor your coworkers want to hear you whine about your problems. They want to hear your ideas for solutions. Present any constructive and proactive ideas to your boss in a professional manner, and you just might find yourself in an improved working environment—and possibly a better position for a pay raise!

TIP: During difficult moments, take a deep breath (or two or three). Realize that this is only temporary. Don't overreact to a trivial and transient situation. By overreacting, you are giving the situation more of your energy than it deserves.

The unsatisfied client

By nature, skin care therapists and other spa professionals are empathetic and compassionate. We love helping people, and strive to make a favorable impression in the treatment room. When our clients do not love our service and express concerns, we naturally internalize their

continues



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comments. That internalization of others' experiences can be detrimental to our health! My suggestion is to develop a mental checklist when dealing with an unsatisfied client. There are many variables in every treatment. Don't jump to the conclusion that it was something you did. Remember that 80 percent of the treatment outcome is dependent on the client's work/play lifestyle choices, and their commitment to a home care regimen.

TIP: Before jumping to conclusions and internalizing negativity from a client, take a deep breath. During this breath, remember that you are a skilled and educated service provider, and then begin to draw upon your knowledge base to find a solution to the client's concern. By using your breath, you also slow down and become more focused on the issue, rather than your emotion.

TIP: If you have the ability to respond later, give difficult situations 24 hours to rest. A day can give you more clarity on a situation, and the extra time will allow you to think first rather than act on pure emotion. Plus, when you take this time you can get in a quiet space, meditate and reflect on the issue at hand. You have probably heard the old adage, "What a difference a day makes." Well, it's true!

Performance reviews

Don't wait until your next performance review to find out how others think you can improve. Ask your supervisor what you need to do in order to improve your performance today. This gesture shows initiative, a willingness to learn and an eagerness to succeed—all traits that are sure to impress any boss. Too scared to ask your supervisor for that all important meeting?

TIP: We all tend to become shallow breathers when we are working with someone who is perceived to be superior. Catch your breath, and remind yourself to breathe deep and stay focused on the task at hand. Visualize your intended positive outcome.

Create your own set of goals

Bosses love it when staff members come up with their own set of goals. It shows initiative, a desire to get ahead and the ability to think creatively. Even though this is a positive endeavor, it can bring about its own stress and anxiety. My suggestion is to simply breathe through it. Write out your goals and then ask your supervisor to set aside a convenient time to discuss them. Maintain written documentation of all your accomplishments, and use this information during your next review.

TIP: Take a deep breath and get into a meditative mode. Take some time to relax when you are breathing, and encourage your mind and body to slow down. Have a notepad handy to write down any thoughts that come to you. Don't judge; just sit quietly and breathe your way into your new goals.

Show up early every day

Don't just show up on time—try to show up early! Always give yourself more than enough cushion time to be punctual, particularly if you live in a city with traffic issues. On the days when you do arrive early, settle in and get your secondary tasks out of the way before it's time to get down to business.

TIP: Rather than rush into your day, take a deep breath after you get to work, set a positive intention for the day and begin your morning with a smile!

The more you practice focused, dynamic breathing, the more you will discover its benefits and become more aware of your negative breathing patterns. Commit to completely replacing the short and shallow breathing that has kept you from experiencing relaxation and an anxiety-free life with focused relaxation breathing. ■

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