

Course Four

How to Diaphragm Breathe for Effective Communication

Free Lesson: Introduction to Diaphragm Breathing

After this free lesson team members will:

- Know the four steps to speaking with a diaphragm breath
- Experience a diaphragm breath. Learn the benefit when speaking with full air
- Always be heard when talking from a diaphragm breath

There is a difference between breathing for life and breathing for more effective communication. Speaking from a full breath is an important skill for producing a stronger voice with better projection. It also helps with maintaining professional and controlled speaking skills. It may be difficult to fully achieve your communication goals without correct breathing. Some communication issues that can occur from communicating on limited breath support follow:

- Not having enough air to finish your thought
- Lower volume at the end of your statement
- Overall low volume with poor projection
- Vocal fry toward the end of your statement
- Tension in your throat
- Wavering pitch or creating a low, breathy voice

People who talk fast or in a monotone, mumble, or have a foreign accent tend to take a shallow breath, say their line, and then continue with the cycle of shallow breathing, causing less effective communication. It is a nice change

when you can discontinue shallow breathing and fast talking. The goal is to say your statement with a full breath. By becoming educated on how to breathe effectively, you will be able to speak with a stronger and more powerful voice and with better control of your speech mechanism. You will present as calm and controlled. Characteristics like that support an image of leadership.

There are two typical breathing patterns most people do. Identify which breathing pattern belongs to you.

Chest Breathing

This is the most common breathing pattern, where the upper part of the rib cage and chest expand on inhalation. However, this may not be the best breathing for conversational speech. The chest breath is only a partial breath, and talking from a chest breath can cause you to feel as if you're running out of air before you finish your thought. Chest breathers are often not in a position to fully project their voices because there is less air to work with. When air is limited in the vocal mechanism, it can cause your voice to sound tense or strained or to waver in pitch or for you to speak with pitch breaks or vocal fry. Monotone speakers are typically chest breathers. They tend to speak their line; take a quick, shallow breath; say another line; and then take another short breath. This pattern becomes an ineffective cycle of breathing while talking and can also create a tight vocal mechanism and thinner and strained voice quality. Learning how to speak with a fuller breath will eliminate those behaviors.

Diaphragm Breathing

For optimal voice usage and projection, proper breathing must come from the midsection or diaphragm. This type of breathing will come from the region of your stomach and lower rib cage, providing the most volume of air for voicing. It will allow you to speak on controlled exhalation, creating natural projection and a pleasing vocal quality. Diaphragm breathing will help reduce overall muscular force and tension as well as give you better posture. This breathing style is a

skill taught to actors, political figures, public speakers, corporate professionals, and anyone who wants to have highly effective communication.

When you breathe from your diaphragm, you are giving yourself a full amount of air for a rich and robust voice. Breathing on limited air from your upper chest provides less air for your voice to operate. When you use your voice with only a small amount of air, the result is a softer voice, with weaker tone quality and limited projection. Good breath support gives your vocal folds the power to do their work.

Identify your current breathing style:

Breathing and Speech Behaviors

Some speakers who talk fast or in a monotone tend to be shallow breathers. Learning how to speak from a diaphragm breath will improve your speech quality by doing the following:

- Making your message easier to understand and more professional sounding
- Providing more fluid thought formulation and organization from being more controlled and relaxed
- Granting easier access to vocabulary words because of a more relaxed mind and body
- Reducing laryngeal tension, making the optimal pitch range easier to access
- Improving articulation because of fewer speech errors because of the controlled speaking rate from having more breath

Talking will feel more comfortable from a full breath. I often spend about one or two weeks teaching my clients how to speak from a diaphragm breath as a significant component of their speech and voice improvement program.

Learning How to Diaphragm Breathe in Four Manageable Parts

This course will demonstrate how to breathe from the diaphragm in 4 parts. Breathing from the diaphragm is certainly achievable but may feel awkward at first if this is a new skill. Most people are chest breathers and do not naturally speak from a diaphragm breath. It may take a week to retrain your brain to learn how to take a single breath from that abdominal area. The good news is that you can learn to speak from a diaphragm breath and that as a bonus, you will also experience better projection, speak with richer vocal tones, and feel more comfortable during highly demanding speaking situations. Learning how to diaphragm breathe will be demonstrated in four parts:

- Experiencing a Diaphragm Breath
- Establishing a Diaphragm Breath
- Speaking from a Diaphragm Breath
- Diaphragm Breathing for Conversational Speech

Thank you for participating in this free lesson. I hope you found it insightful and helpful. I wish you great success!

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