

The Fourteenth Breathing Theme

In this Theme we "hurry up and relax".

Remember the *Step-by-Step Relaxation* from the *Third Breathing Theme*? No doubt it's been helping you let go. You can fine tune this so that you can be very deeply relaxed in a single breath. (If you haven't been doing the *Third Breathing Theme*, now's the time to go back and learn it. When you feel very comfortable with it, come back here. That should take at least a week of daily practice, so, see you then!)

Learning the Fourteenth Breathing Theme

You can do this standing, sitting or lying down. While you're getting used to the Breathing Theme, lying down might be your best choice, because this can take 5 – 10 minutes.

Getting Started

- Settle into a comfortable position – just as if you are going to do the *Third Breathing Theme*, step-by-step relaxation.
- Take a few breaths to settle into place.
- Take a moment to enjoy breathing in and out. Feel your body sinking down and letting go each time you breathe out.

Once you're feeling settled and more focused:

- start taking a little longer to let go of your breath.
- Feel your body relaxing even more deeply with each breath out now that you're giving it longer to let go.

Go on to the next steps.

Step 1

Relax your body step by step using 4 breaths for each area.

Step 2

Starting at your feet again relax your body step by using *one breath* for each area.

Step 3

Starting at your feet again relax your whole body with one breath.
How do you do that?

Relaxing your whole body with one breath

- Start breathing in and notice your feet.
 - Notice any tension there.
- As you continue to breathe in, draw your attention up your body
 - Notice any tight spots along the way.

(Especially notice key areas that are often tight for you. Most people have a few spots where they particularly hold their tension. Pay special attention to these areas.)

When you breathe out

- Feel the weight in your body drop down starting with your head.
- As you continue to breathe out,
 - feel your shoulders sinking back
 - your chest dropping down
 - your hips sinking
 - the weight in your legs dissolving
 - your feet dissolving into the floor.

Repeat every time you breathe in and out.

Working with the Fourteenth Breathing Theme

1. Start your practice with a *Yellow Level Breathing* exercise, like 1:1:2:2 breathing. Do this for a few minutes, as a meditation. This will slow down your breathing, connect you with your body and focus you.

2. Move on to Step-by-Step Relaxation.

Do this for a few moments, until you're familiar with your whole body and relaxed from your toes to your nose.

Close the relaxation by practicing the *Fourteenth Breathing Theme*. Spend a few minutes relaxing your whole body in one breath.

3. Now you're ready to do your poses.

Once you're in your pose, for your first repetition of the pose do *Step-by-Step Relaxation* of your whole body, from your feet to your face.

- Use one breath for each area.

For your second & third repetition of the pose, instead of step-by-step relaxation, relax your body from bottom to top *in a single breath*, as you learned in the introduction to the *Fourteenth Breathing Theme*.

Tip If you can't hold the pose very long, either pick another pose, or shorten up the Step-by-Step Relaxation by combining body areas. For example, legs can be done all as one area, both arms can be done together. etc.

So, by practicing *Breathing Theme 14* you'll get more out of the stretch. You will also fight the pose less. Some people master this theme to the point of falling asleep in their poses!

If you get muddled, go back to relaxing your body one piece at a time, one breath for each area.

Relaxed Bodies Stretch Better

Getting Even Better

If you get really good at this, then try this:
in one breath relax your whole body.

Notice if your body is willing to stretch more as it relaxes.

If your body is naturally moving into stretching more, go with it.

The more you do this *Breathing Theme*, the more skillful you will get at it and the less stress you'll carry with you throughout your day.

