

## Sixteenth Breathing Theme - Deep Muscle Relaxation

In the *Fifteenth Breathing Theme, The Sponge* you learned how to relax the muscles that are stretching. We can take this to even deeper levels of relaxation now by combining *The Sponge* with the *Fourteen Breathing Theme* where you relaxed, bottom to top, in a single breath.

Once you're good at working with *The Sponge*, all you need to do is add one change to your visualization.

### For the Sixteenth Breathing Theme

- Choose your pose.
- Imagine you are a Sponge (*a la Fifteenth Breathing Theme*)

#### After you settle into the Sponge:

- Each time you breathe in, imagine the water is coming in through the soles of your feet, just like it did during *The Fountain*.
- As you breathe the water in, imagine it is traveling up the full length of your body
- As you breathe out, imagine the water is sinking back down inside of you. It is soaking into your muscles and bathing your entire inner body in warmth.

#### Once you are fully into that visualization, you can do this variation:

- Go into your pose
- Stay with being a Fountain / Sponge.
- As you breathe out, feel the water sinking back down, soaking into your insides.
- Especially feel the water soaking into the muscles that are stretching. Feel them filling up. Feel them getting warmer and heavier.
- If the muscles are ready to stretch a little more, go with it.

This visualization is deeply relaxing while giving you a strong work-out. It's a great muscle builder and relieves tension very quickly. It works best with certain poses. Some poses naturally lend themselves to the visualization. These include:

Back Stretch	Lunge
Back Bend	Neck Stretch (works with <i>The Sponge</i> )
Bow	Pelvic Push
Half Bow	Pelvic Lift
Cobra	Pigeon
Chest Expansion	Plow
Dead Bug	Puppy
Downward Dog	Reclining Butterfly
Forward Bends	Side to Sides
Happy Baby	Shoulder Stand
Leg Clasp	Spider 1
Leg Over	Wide Angle Pose
Leg Stretch	

