

Second Breathing Theme Relaxing More Deeply

When you're doing yoga, it's very important to know how to relax. That's easy enough to say, but how on earth do you actually *do* it?! You may have had a yoga drill sergeant commanding you to *RELAX!* But that doesn't work very well. You may have your own internal drill sergeant nattering at you the whole time you're doing yoga, "You should be relaxing, you know. You're not very relaxed right now. For heaven's sake, can't you just relax! How are you ever going to do yoga if you can't even relax when I tell you to!"

That doesn't work, does it?

What does work is focusing on your breathing.

Remember - your body relaxes when you breathe out. And – your mind focuses when you breathe in. Listen to yourself breathing in and breathing out and feel your body letting go. The drill sergeants can't penetrate it.

Breathing Theme 2 is simply this

The longer you take to breathe out, the more time your body has to relax.

By "longer breaths out", I don't mean you have to splutter you way down to the last drop of air. Just give your breath a little extra time to drop away. It doesn't have to be much longer; just enough to feel an extra bit of sinking down and letting go.

Working with the Second Breathing Theme

So your **Second Breathing Theme** is to give your *Relaxation Response* a chance to happen more deeply. You do this by taking longer breaths out.

- Get into the stretch and get comfortable.
- Check for pain and make adjustments.
- Now go back to breathing in and out.
 - Notice your breath as it comes and goes.
 - Notice how your body is relaxing a little as you breathe out.
(You'll notice this most with parts of your body that aren't doing the stretch.)
- After a few breaths like this, start taking a little longer to breathe out.
 - Notice how that gives your body more time to let go and relax.

Use this Breathing Theme When

- You are still coming to terms with a pose.
 - You are new to yoga
- You are learning how to be more relaxed throughout the day.