

The Twenty-first Breathing Theme

Exploring the Edge with Blue Level

So far, Blue Level has been a very gentle, peaceful experience. You have been using the poses and breathing to create a supple body and to calm your mind.

Now you're going to achieve the same level of peacefulness while working harder, stretching your body to its limit. This is a good body builder and, more importantly, this *Breathing Theme* will train you to feel calm even under severe stress. The more you practice this, the more you will automatically feel calm when life becomes nuts.

For the Twenty-first Breathing Theme

1. Begin as you would for the *Nineteenth* and *Twentieth Breathing Themes*.
2. Do your warm up breathing stretches.
3. Do your breathing practice, going into 1:1:2:2 Breathing.
4. **Once you're into your main poses:**
 - a. Settle into place.
 - b. Take some time to notice your breathing.
 - c. Start doing *The Fountain* from the end of *Green Level*. If you can count your breath while you do this, great. If not, let the count go and stay with *The Fountain*.
 - d. Do many repetitions of your pose, not holding any part for any extra length of time. Just as you did in *Breathing Themes Nineteen* and *Twenty*.
5. **As you do each pose:**
 - i. Breathing in, go into the pose. Imagine you are a Fountain, breathing the water in through your feet.
 - ii. As you hold your breath, hold the next part of the pose. Feel the water soaking into your body. See if your body will stretch any farther.
 - iii. As you breathe out, move into the next part of the pose. Imagine the water is tumbling down around you and back into your body, going toward the stretching muscles. See how far you can extend as you reach into the next part of the pose.
 - iv. As you hold, feel yourself soaking in the water, noticing how peaceful and still everything has become. Can you maintain that feeling while the stretch increases? To do this, the movements can be very slight. If not, maybe you'll notice it next time.

Continue into the next breath and the next repetition of the pose. Do as many repetitions as you like. 3 – 5 repetitions is usually plenty for anybody working to their limit.