

Are You An Upside Down Breather?

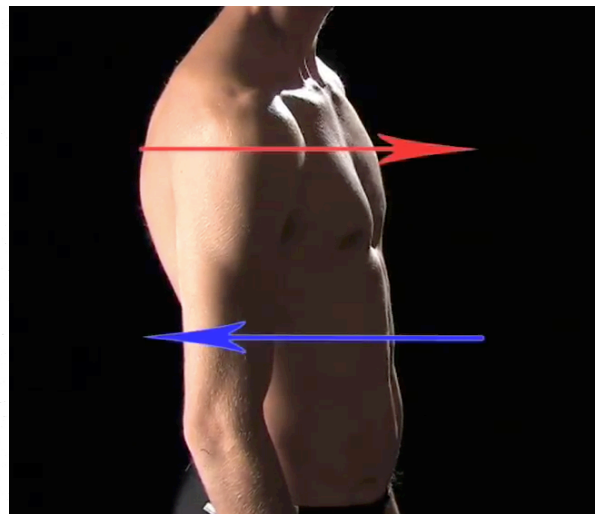
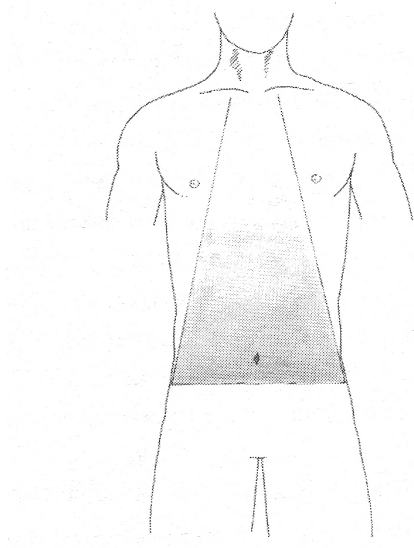
(Adapted from *Breathe Easy* by Dr David Lewis)

Dr David Lewis BSc (Hons), D.Phil. C.Psychol., FISMA, FISTD



Bo-Tau

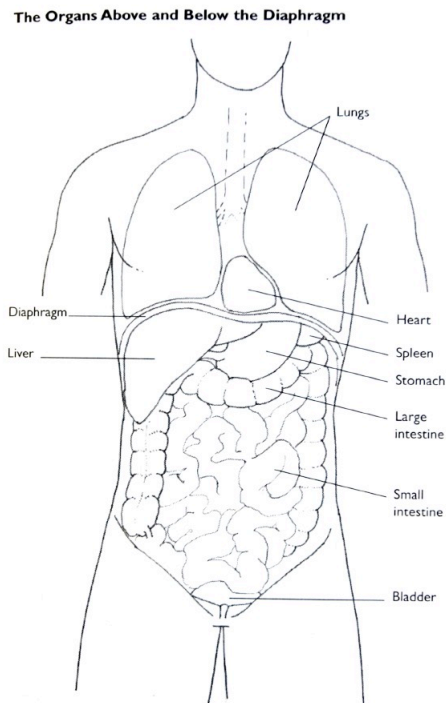
During deep, health enhancing, breathing the diaphragm performs between 70% and 80% of all the work necessary, leaving the remainder to be done by the secondary respiratory muscles. When we breathe in this way a stable triangle is formed, with its base extending across the centre of the body. This type of breathing creates a subjective feeling of being grounded and more in touch with our “gut feelings.”



*In Deep Diaphragmatic Breathing airflow is smooth and efficient (Still from the **Bo-Tau** Home Training Programme)*

Deep Diaphragmatic Breathing (DDB), which you will learn in the **Bo-Tau** Home Training Programme will also help protect and nourish your spine.

Because the diaphragm attaches along the front of the lumbar vertebrae when it is able to move freely and easily this powerful muscle not only helps to stabilise the spine but also helps prevent bone degeneration and arthritic condition by providing traction to the vertebral column.



It also safeguards you against the agony of a trapped nerve while keeping the spongy the intervertebral discs plump and healthy. Because, after the age of about twenty, these discs lack their own direct blood supply their only way of remaining moist is by absorbing fluid from the surrounding tissues, something that only occurs during movement.

In addition regular, rhythmic movement of the diaphragm gives all the organs of digestion, reproduction and excretion an excellent workout.

As Donna Farhi graphically puts it in *The Breathing Book*: “When the diaphragm moves in the luxurious expansions that mark full breathing, all these organs are massaged, rolled, churned and bathed in new blood, fluids and oxygen...Breathing stimulates all of the body to work better and this is why it has such a profound effect on our sense of well-being”. (p 53)

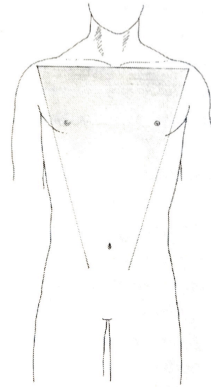
Without this massage the organs of digestion, the stomach, liver, spleen, intestines, colon and bladder, can become sluggish. Toxins are removed less efficiently there is a reduction in the amounts of oxygen received by these organs.

Sadly for good health and maximum vitality this is not the way the majority of us tend to breathe.

Far more often the primary muscles to only 20 percent of the work with the secondary respiratory muscles - the *scalenes*, *ternocleidomastoid*, *trapezius*, and *pectoralis minor* left to perform 80 percent of the task.

The result is to produce an unstable triangle whose apex faces downward. This produces what is known as “upside down” breathing, as illustrated below.

**Unstable Triangle Cause by Upside-Down Breathing
Using the Secondary Muscles of Respiration**



Upside down breathing caused by neglecting the diaphragm as a primary muscle of breath work is now almost universal in the developed world. Not because we are born to breathe that way – indeed exactly the opposite is true – but because we have learned to breathe that way.

Watch a small baby at rest and you’ll see that although her chest moves only slightly, her stomach rises and falls effortlessly with each inhalation and exhalation, clearly demonstrating her primary respiratory muscles are doing most of the work. She is breathing slowly, deeply and freely from her diaphragm.

By the time this child reaches adolescence, however, the likelihood is that constant tension around her abdominal muscles will prevent them from expanding fully so making it impossible for her diaphragm to flatten completely.

These changes are a reflection both of the tensions imposed by growing up and that growing up patterns of breathing copied from her parents. As Donna arhi observes: “ Most breathing patterns are the accumulation of a lifetime’s experience and they are as familiar to us as our way of walking.

The nervous system has become conditioned to repeat these patterns even when the patterns are dysfunctional.” (p 93).

“Upside down” breathing adversely affects many aspects of health and performance - according to some medical researchers it plays a role in around 75 percent of illness.

Fortunately simply by changing the way you breathe these problems may quickly and easily be rectified, as you will learn in the ***Bo-Tau*** Home Training Programme *DVDs*.