

Systema Breathing Basics

The Russian Breathing System or Systema Breathing applies to every waking moment of your life!

The Seven Principles of Systema Breathing

1. Pathway:

Inhale through nose; exhale through mouth.

2. Leading:

Let breath slightly lead physical action in time.

3. Sufficiency:

Take as much breath as you need at the moment, for the action, not more not less.

4. Continuity:

Keep breathing, without interruption or holding, no matter what you are doing (unless doing a special breath-hold training)

5. Pendulum:

Let every breath cycle complete itself and reverse naturally, as a pendulum swings and reverses naturally without interference. Allow, and experience, the reversal pause at the end of each cycle.

6. Independence:

No specific type of action is invariantly tied to any particular phase of breath cycle (i.e. you should be able to punch or roll as well on inhale as exhale).

7. No tension:

Keep your muscles and your body overall relaxed.

Breathing Basics for working with the Psyche

Breathing is introduced in the very first Systema class. Without it, no exercise is possible. When it comes to working with psyche, here are a few simple **breathing guidelines**:

a- Inhalation always mean tension because muscles tense up as we inhale. Exhalation always means relaxation.

b- Breathe in and out through the nose; if there is a lot of tension, exhale through the mouth. When you inhale through the nose, the air passes through the nasal cavities, which are connected to a large number of blood vessels. This way, the brain monitors the oxygen flow rate with a high degree of accuracy, rarely resulting in hyperventilation (excess oxygen in blood).

c- Any great stopping or holding means stress for the body and agitation of the psyche. This results in increased baseline muscular tension.

d- Breath is distributed throughout the body. Any areas of tension prevent or impede breath circulation. Breath can fill the body and make it whole and complete. Tension prevent this from occurring and becomes the wake links in the body.

e- Breathing and attention are closely connected. Where attention goes, breathing flows.

f- Breathing should be sufficient. Lack of breathing causes panting and elevated heartbeat rate; excessive breathing results in dizziness. In order to control the amount of oxygen coming in, simply shift the focus. In case of low oxygen, focus primarily on inhaling; when there is too much oxygen, focus on exhaling.

g- Breathing intensity and pace can be adjusted to fit the specific situation and workload.

Breathing is one of the 4 pillars of Systema (**breathing**, relaxation, posture and movement). It is there for important to practice and study this closely.

Here are a view recommended books and dvd's on Systema Breathing with great exercises.

Let every Breath by Vladimir Vasiliev (book)

Systema Manual by Major Konstantin Komarov (book)

Systema Breathing by Vladimir Vasiliev (Dvd)

Breath for Internal Control by Vladimir Vasiliev (Dvd)

With Respect and Best Wishes,

Patrick van het Nederend
Systema Amsterdam