

The Transversus Abdominis Assisted Thoraco-Diaphragmatic (TATD) Breath: Better Breathing for A Safer Spine

The TATD breath was developed and is defined by the founder of Professional Yoga Therapy, Ginger Garner.

Intention/Purpose

1. Fully engage the respiratory diaphragm.
2. Strengthen diaphragm.
3. Improve concentration, focus, and energy.
4. Strengthen spine and prevent back pain.
5. Manage existing back pain.
6. Create safety during yoga posture practice.
7. Conducive to a neutral, well postured spine.
8. Improve posture.
9. Confidence building.
10. Prevent urinary/bladder incontinence when the pelvic floor muscles are used during the breath (Kegel).



Figure 7-1. Supported easy seated



Figure 7-2. Supine easy seated, supported in *THREE TIER APPROACH*



Figure 7-3. Block supported easy seated

Starting Position - Performed from any posture but best performed in active practice such as sitting, yoga postures, or exercise.

Action

Before learning this breath, please make sure that you have mastered an abdominal breath. Make sure you are not breathing in the chest, that all your breathing occurs in the belly region. Then, you can progress to this (TATD) breath.

Entry - For learning purposes, place your hands on your ribcage. To perform the breath, draw the belly button into the spine lightly but firmly enough to create a slight internal tension. Inhale and feel the ribcage moving like bucket handles, out to the side.

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Exit - Exhale and feel the ribcage become smaller and smaller.

Alignment

Respiratory diaphragm – the respiratory diaphragm is fully engaged in this specific type of breath as a result of the concentric (drawing-in) contraction from the transversus abdominis (the main muscle for stabilizing and providing sturdiness and stiffness to the back and spine), the abdominal contents offer resistance to the descending diaphragm on its contraction (descent) during inhalation.

Modifications (see figures 7.1-7.3)

1. Learn to perform the breath lying down in bed or lying down with a pillow under the knees.
2. Learn to perform the breath next, by sitting in a supportive chair with good posture.
3. Progress to perform it while doing every day activities, such as laundry and preparing dinner.
4. Use the breath to increase strength in the spine, improve energy and concentration, and during any exercise or yoga practice (except for relaxation postures).

Tips

1. Maintain the length of your breath as if you are abdominal breathing in order to fully engage the respiratory diaphragm.

Therapeutic Applications

Physical body - transversus abdominis rehabilitation and neuromuscular re-education; tonifying; strengthening

Energetic or breath body – empowering, energizing, confidence building

Emotional body – confidence building, fortifying

Intellectual body - clarifying to improve focus and concentration for learning

Spiritual body – prepares the body for increasing self-awareness, compassion and understanding for others.

Doshic Applications – Balancing for all *doshas*.

Contraindications – None. Anyone can perform this breath technique. Post-surgical patients who have had surgery (i.e. C-section or hysterectomy for women) in the abdominal area should gently practice splinting their abdomen by hugging a pillow into the abdominal area, and practicing the gentle drawing in or initiation of the transversus abdominis. This practice acts to re-train the abdominals to fire and will minimize neural and motor damage to the area, as well as assist in minimizing scarring, and helping you gain a nice, toned, (and flatter) stomach.