

# Breathe easy

A PRACTICE BASED ON EASTERN PRINCIPLES LEAVES YOU FEELING ENERGISED, WRITES JOOLS STONE



**DON'T PANIC** How many times has someone told you to “take some deep breaths” to combat a stressful situation? Simple advice that’s easy to dismiss perhaps, but the fact is that few of us actually do breathe properly. Most people use just 20 per cent of their respiratory system and mastering your breathing can have a noticeable effect on your physical and emotional well-being.

Anne-Marie Birch, pictured below, is one of Edinburgh’s few practitioners in Transformational Breath, a technique grounded in eastern principles and developed in America by Dr Judith Kravitz. Each session at her basement studio, beside Colinton Dell starts by stating an intention which to focus. Mine was simply to be calm and panic less. The first thing to master is the breathing technique itself. The technique involves drawing breath from deep within your abdomen, carrying it up the body and releasing it gently, maintaining a circular, unbroken rhythm. To help you get into a natural flow, a special tool is applied: the top of a plastic bottle is put into your mouth ensuring you keep it open and get into the rhythm.

Accupressure is used to help open up the various places where breath can “get stuck” and you’re also shown how to “tone and pound”,

where you thrash your arms and feet, pounding the floor, while letting out a loud and prolonged “arrrr” to release

energy. Good fun, once you stop feeling self conscious about it.

At times the session was deeply relaxing, almost hypnotic, at others very invigorating. Towards the end I had a definite sensation of being somehow “outside of myself” and I certainly left feeling energised and upbeat.

Participants typically have four to six two-hour sessions to develop the technique before they can practice effectively on their own. They can also join small breathing groups where breathers practice together and learn from each other.

See [www.transformationalbreath.co.uk/](http://www.transformationalbreath.co.uk/) or call Anne-Marie Birch on 0131-441 9247 / 0797 1801746 or [anne-marie@intouch-therapy.co.uk](mailto:anne-marie@intouch-therapy.co.uk)

