

# Ep #105: The Connection Between Your Head, Breath and Your State of Being



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With Your Host

**Susi Hately**

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**Male Announcer:** You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hatley. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hatley.

Welcome and welcome back. With this episode I want to dig into a breathing practice that has your focus on your head. The reason for this is when we can bring attention to the head, we begin to see the relationship of tension that might exist in the head and how that relates to neck, thoracic spine, lumbar spine, pelvis, even down through the legs and the feet.

A lot of tension that resides in the head can often be blamed on a poked head forward position, which these days is blamed on our phones and texting. The thing is, is that people all through my lifetime have had a poked head forward even before there were phones, we just blamed it on different things.

So the reality is, is that people can have a head poked forward for all sorts of reasons and the position can lead to or be impacted by other things going on the body. So by taking a gentle practice and noticing what's going on in the head and seeing the relationship to other parts in the body, you can open up some ideas of what's contributing to the way that you're feeling and then start to take action on making changes.

So this practice will be an awareness practice and a breathing practice, where we'll start by settling into our regular breathing and then directing the breath utilizing our imagination up to our head. Now, of course, we don't breathe through our head per se, it's an imaginary technique to help connect ourselves to that area and open up the gates of awareness to the rest of our body and our being.

As you do the practice, if you notice that there's any tension increasing, if there's an amount of anxiety or other emotion that you're not comfortable with, then by all means, shut it down. Turn me off and I will see you at the

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next episode. You can also just ease back on the practice and see if you dial it back and reduce the effort, if that makes a change.

The key here is I have a mic on and I'm talking into my computer, I can't see anybody. So I don't know if this practice is going to be perfect or not perfect, or even helpful to you. So I really rely on your own sense of awareness, your own sense of self to determine if this makes sense for you. So please choose wisely and recognize that your body is your barometer and pay close attention to it.

The practice itself can be done lying down on your back, in sitting, or in standing. You can certainly do it while you are cooking. I wouldn't do it while opening an oven and pulling something out of there. But if you're beside a stove and just stirring the pot, keeping an eye on things, absolutely. Brushing your teeth, absolutely. Driving, not so much. Operating heavy equipment, not so much. I've got other episodes in this podcast for those things.

So with that then, let's bring the attention to start with on your breathing and just how you are today. How has your day been? How have you been with your day? How was your day been with you? How have you been with your body? Your mind? And how is your body and your mind been with you?

Take a moment and just suss out where you are starting from a baseline perspective. How does your body feel? What's your breath doing right now? And just notice how the breath is moving and where you feel it moving in your body. I sometimes refer to this as like where is the breath open? Meaning where does it move your body? You might feel your belly moving or your ribcage. You might feel the breath coming in your nose. You might feel it go out your nose.

And now bring your attention to your head, your skull, and notice where your head meets your spine. We don't often think about it but our skull

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consists of 22 bones. We're going to be focusing on one area where the parietal bones come together, and it's a suture called the sagittal suture right at the top of the head.

But for now we're just going to focus in on the head itself. And let's begin by nodding your head yes and no. So moving the head on the spine, bringing the chin to the chest and then bringing it back to start.

And then just keep moving in that way. And again, just notice if you can move it easily, if there's any tension increasing. And do your best to stay in a range where the tension is not increasing.

And then begin to move your head into a no position, so you're turning your head left and right as if you're saying no. And pay attention to how your head is moving on your spine. And then bring your head back and notice what you feel, notice your breath, notice your body.

And then bring your hand now, up to the top of your head. And it's the middle, basically, at the top of your head where the two halves of your skull meet. Out the tips of your fingers along that middle line called the sagittal suture.

And then begin to take your attention of breath to this area. Imagine that you can breathe into your fingers. Or imagine you've got nostrils along the sagittal suture that you can breathe into your nostrils as an imagination or just positioned right along that line connecting to the two sides of your head.

Allow the imagery to gently guide your attention here. You're not increasing the volume of your breath, this is very gentle and very easy. The pressure in your eyes should not be going up. There should be no increase of tension in your jaw or in your neck. In fact, for some people who have headaches or migraines you might even feel your headaches and migraines going down.

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Okay, so while you're breathing up through this top of your head, notice what else is happening elsewhere. Notice what's going on through your thoracic spine. Notice what's going on in your neck or your lumbar spine, down your pelvis, your knees, your feet. Notice what else is occurring in your body as you do this.

Now if you're finding that placing your hand at the top of your head is not working, whether it's due to shoulder issues or back issues or length of arm, then what you can do is if you're lying on your back you can place a block or a book gently, kind of put the edge of it next to that middle line of your head. Or you can simply be aware of that without putting your hands there.

All right, so noticing what you're noticing as a result of this, now what I'd like you to do is you're going to take both of your hands, if your hands can reach, and you're going to bring them around the back of your ears. And you're going to hold your skull with your hands and lift your skull slightly off of your neck, if you could. You're not really going to lift it off your neck, but it's going to feel like you're lifting off of your neck.

I find that if I splay my fingers up along my head or along my skull, bring my thumb's behind my ears, and they hook around a part of my head, that they just naturally find a place, that's an easy grasp. And then when I've got that, it's like I've got my hands around the ball, so to speak. And then it can gently lift my head, as if I'm lifting it off my neck. And then from there, slowly nod your head again, dropping your chin down very gently and then lifting it back up.

Okay, and then take a pause, let your hands go and rest your head back down. And then we're going to come back to breathing through that top suture again, but this time you can either do it without lifting your head off that neck, like without doing that traction exercise, or you can.

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So you can either place your hands around your head again, gently lift that skull into a traction off the neck a bit and then feel the breath up into the top of your head. Or if that is not working for you, then just feel the breath at the top of your head.

And notice if anything is different now that you've done that movement or while you're doing that movement. And then take a pause and again notice, let the hands go. Take a pause and just allow yourself to breathe normally and scan through your body and notice how you feel through your torso, your belly, your pelvic floor, your feet.

Okay, now come back to the sagittal suture again, hands resting on your torso, or if it works you can place your fingers at the top of that suture again, whatever works best for you. And take the breath to that top suture.

And now I want you to imagine that the suture carries forward along the forehead to the point between your eyebrows and maybe down to your nose. And can you breathe through that whole line from the top of your head, the middle of your forehead to your nose?

And then do the same thing but this time from the top of the head, that middle suture, that sagittal suture, go backward along to the backside of your head and do the same thing. Feeling an energetic line going down the middle part of your skull around the backside towards the neck. And can you feel yourself breathing? You don't need to get the entire line, but what of the line can you feel the breath entering into?

All right, lovely. And then let that all go. Come back to your normal breath, feel what's going on through your torso. Inhale and exhale. Okay, just tune in to what's happening in your body now.

Sometimes people notice that the tension that they now realize exists in their head, which they didn't notice before, has a relationship to something else that is a little bit more chatty with them. Something that screams a little

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bit more or is a bit louder. And then they start to recognize this relationship with their head. They might recognize a relationship to their shoulders, or their chest, or their abdomen.

And if you're wondering what to do with the information, where you can start is simply make note of what has shifted or changed with the exercise itself. And notice if there's any other patterns with the other activities that you do in your day to day world, whether it's activities like physical activity or whether it's how you sit in front of your computer, or how you do your work.

Or where and how you embody emotions that you experience. Because emotions are felt vibrations in our body, which can create tension and strain. And so maybe your head is a part of that, I don't know. But there might be something there for you to explore.

And then as you tune into that, you can actually make some change. Maybe it's through yoga practice, maybe it's through a breath practice, maybe it's through a meditation practice. Or maybe it's changing the pillow that you utilize when you sleep.

So with this now, again, noticing your breath, noticing the connection to your body and your brain, and to your being. Take a few more breaths before you carry on with your day. Have a great time exploring and we will see you next time.

If this episode has resonated and you're looking to deepen this idea of getting your body back on board, of listening deeply to your symptoms, of listening to the whispers so you don't have to hear the screams and you're looking for one to one support or professional training, then reach out to us at [health@functionalsynergy.com](mailto:health@functionalsynergy.com) where we can customize your learning path. That's [health@functionalsynergy.com](mailto:health@functionalsynergy.com). Looking forward to hearing from you.