

## Three Functional Components of the SOUNDER SLEEP SYSTEM

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The **Sounder Sleep System** consists of three functional components. Here they are for your convenient review:

1. Guided Natural Breathing, or GNB
2. Daytime relaxation techniques, called **DayTamers**
3. Nighttime sleep-inducing techniques, called Hypnogenic Gestures or Mini-Moves.

These are the basic ingredients of the **Sounder Sleep System's** “recipe” for natural, restful sleep. They provide a very useful schema for both the teacher and the student of the system. They are an aid for teaching, and they are an aid for personal practice of the system. Here, we will briefly review each of them and remind you of their meaning and purpose.

### Guided Natural Breathing

The first purpose of Guided Natural Breathing is to restore the natural rhythm of your breath. Living in our fast-paced, modern world is stressful. Many of us are overworked, overscheduled, and overwhelmed. As a result of these stresses, our natural biological rhythms become disturbed.

One of the first and most important biological rhythms that gets disturbed is the rhythm of the breath. The pace, the rhythm, and the physical movements of the breath may change in various ways. This outwardly observable change may reflect deeper imbalances in many systems of the body. It can have profound consequences for the way you feel, and for the quality of your sleep.

Unlike conventional breathing exercises, GNBs work without any direct control or manipulation of the breath, without conscious intervention of any kind. That's important, because your body's own internal breath mechanism has its own innate wisdom that automatically regulates the breath in the most efficient, accurate way possible. This is the deep wisdom of your own living, breathing body. It is beyond your intelligence, beyond your mind.

The gentle Guided Natural Breathing techniques are designed to bring out the innate wisdom of the natural breath and to allow it to flourish. As a result, you'll receive exactly the right amount of breath for each moment of your life. You'll know when that happens, because the simple act of breathing in and breathing out becomes pleasurable all by itself.

Once the natural rhythm of the breath is restored, you are already well on your way to recovery from the stress of life. Other bodily processes will become more balanced as well. That's why you feel so relaxed and peaceful when you practice these techniques.

The second purpose of Guided Natural Breathing is to provide a foundation for all other practices of the **Sounder Sleep System**. Whenever you practice a relaxing **DayTamer** or a Hypnogenic Gesture (a.k.a. Sleep-inducing Mini-Move), you will breathe naturally, just as you learned to do in our Guided Natural Breathing techniques. Light, easy, natural breathing ensures success in your personal practice of the **Sounder Sleep System**.

The third purpose of Natural Breathing is to provide a bridge between the activated waking state and the deactivated state that precedes sleep. Just get into bed, and practice any Natural Breathing technique for ten minutes or more to get ready for sleep. Or, without practicing any formal technique, just rest quietly and breathe naturally. Little by little, your oxygen consumption declines. Your heart rate, muscle tone, core body temperature, and cerebral processing rate are bound to follow. In this way, you initiate the hypometabolic state that ultimately will bring sleep.

After ten minutes of Natural Breathing, follow up with one of the Hypnogenic Gestures. Sweet dreams!

## **DayTamers**

**DayTamers** are daytime relaxation techniques that are usually practiced while sitting on a stool or chair. (Of course, this may be modified for those who are bedridden or who have postural problems that interfere with comfortable sitting.)

People often ask, "My problem is that I can't sleep at night. Why do I need to practice relaxation techniques during the day?" The answer is quite simple. Falling asleep requires your body to enter a state of reduced physical and mental activation in which blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tone, oxygen consumption, core body temperature, and cerebral processing all decline. This is called a hypometabolic state.

Yet people who experience insomnia or restless sleep usually show signs of *increased* physical and mental activation, not just at bedtime, but twenty-four hours a day. This is called hyperarousal.

As you can imagine, if you are in a state of hyperarousal all day long, you cannot instantly switch it off at bedtime! You cannot descend into that restful, hypometabolic state that is required for deep, restful sleep.

Instead, the heightened physical and mental activation tends to persist throughout the course of the night. It can delay the onset of sleep, and make the sleep you do get shallow, fragmented, and unrestful.

Therefore, using the **DayTamers** to reduce that excess physical and mental activation during waking hours is one of the very best things you can do to ensure deep, restful sleep at night. Being more relaxed during waking hours sets the scene for sounder sleep.

Your regular practice of **DayTamers** during waking hours will make your life more peaceful. And when your life is more peaceful, your sleep is more peaceful. It's really that simple.

Practice for ten minutes or more, one, two, or three times a day depending on the severity of your insomnia. As your insomnia subsides, you can begin to slack off on your practice a little. If it acts up again, you can always "increase the peace."

### **Hypnogenic Gestures (formerly known as Mini-Moves)**

Hypnogenic Gestures are the heart of the **Sounder Sleep System**. They are gentle, physical movement and breathing techniques that you practice right in your own bed to support easier, deeper, more restful sleep. You can practice one or more of these techniques at bedtime to make falling asleep easier and more enjoyable. If you awaken during the night, they will help you return to sleep quickly.

The Hypnogenic Gestures employ both active and passive inhibitory mechanisms to initiate the process of falling asleep. The slow, gentle movements are low-intensity, synchronogenic stimuli that *actively* trigger the inhibitory faculties of the brain to produce a powerful tranquilizing effect. The periods of quiet rest between the movements allow the passive inhibitory mechanisms of the organism to do their work. It is that combination of active and passive inhibitory mechanisms, each amplifying the other's effect, that give the system its power.

The Hypnogenic Gestures are most effective when done as part of an integrated practice along with Natural Breathing and **DayTamers**. That is a systematic practice of the **Sounder Sleep System**. That is what makes the system a system.