

Woodhouse Eaves WI

It had been a very hot day! Several of our members brought fans along to our regular monthly meeting on Wednesday 18th June, and all were appropriately dressed in cool cottons and floral sundresses. The business of the evening included information about the forthcoming garden party on 21st June and reports from the skittles, darts, lunch and gardening groups.

After a cup of tea and biscuits we settled back to enjoy a talk entitled "Breathing techniques for health and wellbeing", by Falguni Patel.

Falguni explained how we can use breathing techniques to calm our mind and control our heart rate. When we are stressed, we breathe shallowly and quickly which increases our heart rate and blood pressure. Our intake of oxygen is not in balance with the amount of carbon dioxide we exhale, and our digestive, nervous and immune systems take a back seat.

Falguni demonstrated a series of breathing techniques and invited us all to join in. The first was mindful breathing, when we concentrated on our normal breathing. The second was balanced breathing, when we inhaled to a slow count of three and then exhaled to a slow count of three. The third was deep relaxation breathing, when we inhaled for a count of three and then exhaled for a count of four or five. Finally, we practised box breathing, when we inhaled to a count of three, held our breath for a count of three, exhaled for a count of three and then held our empty breath for a count of three.



Fulgani described how these simple techniques can help you to relax, to go to sleep and can have long-term benefits for your heart and lungs. They can be practised at any time and the number of counts can be increased as the lungs become used to the techniques.

Jane Fatcher thanked Fulgani for a most interesting talk and reported that her heart rate had noticeably decreased, having checked it on her fitness watch before and after the breathing exercises. We all felt calmer and more relaxed, and the heat and stress of the day were forgotten.

Judith Harrison