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**Software application teaches benefits of deep breathing**

by Gregg MacDonald | Staff writer  
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A Reston alternative healer has teamed up with a Herndon software developer to create an iPhone software application that helps people practice holistic deep breathing techniques -- and it is selling all over the world.

Darshan Khalsa, 61, and his wife Carol O'Donnell Khalsa are Reston-based alternative medicine providers whose Khalsa Integrative Medicine practice centers on holistic care, including Oriental medicine, acupuncture, herbal and enzyme therapy, nutrition, yogic breathing, detoxification, sound

therapy and fertility medicine.

The practice has been in existence since 2003.

"In holistic medicine we take a logical, step-by-step approach to discover what is out of balance and bring people back into balance," Darshan Khalsa said. "Stress is the catalyst for 70 percent of other problems, and getting it under control is a logical first step."

Khalsa achieves this in part by having patients utilize the Kundalini Yoga technique of long, deep breathing that he has practiced since converting to Sikhism more than 30 years ago.

"Sit with your spine straight or lay on the floor with your spine straight," the application instructs. "All inhaling and exhaling is through the nose ..."

"Stress creates short, shallow breathing, much like a fight-or-flight response," Khalsa said. "By controlling breath, you induce a more relaxed state in your body and enable it to lower blood pressure, increase blood circulation and aid in digestion."

"Every form of yoga has its form of breathing practices," agreed Suzanne Leitner-Wise, founder of U.S. 1. Yoga Teacher Training Academy in Alexandria.

"Scientific study has shown that breathing practices are extremely beneficial to health as they help to release toxins from the body, and can lower high blood pressure and help asthma sufferers," she said.

Carol Khalsa attributes the original spark that led to developing the iPhone application to President Obama.

"When we went to President Obama's inauguration, we were inspired by the president telling people to go out into their communities and 'do some good,'" Carol Khalsa said. "So we thought, 'Why not figure out a way to tell more people about the benefits of long deep breathing exercises?'"

It turns out that the Khalsas already had the means to make their vision into a reality.

Jeanne Churchwell is a patient of Darshan Khalsa. She is also half-owner of Herndon software company Tech 2000 Inc.



Shamus Ian Fatzinger/Fairfax County Times  
Darshan S. Khalsa, of Reston's Khalsa Integrative Medicine, LLC, displays the iPhone application he helped design to lead users through a series of deep breathing exercises.

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When the Khalsas related their desire to get the deep breathing technique out to a wider audience, Churchwell knew exactly what to do. "I told them, 'You need to make that into an app!'" she said.

"As soon as I saw an iPhone, I wanted one," Darshan Khalsa said. "I'm a little bit of a techie, so the idea appealed to me."

Tech 2000, which employs about 15 people, has been in business since 1984 but only began developing iPhone applications this year.

The Khalsas and the Churchwells collaborated and came up with the Long Deep Breathing application that launched last month. "The Khalsas really hit a niche market," Churchwell said. "We were amazed. It began selling in Great Britain and Australia the day it came out."

The application, which sells for 99 cents, has both an informational component that lists the benefits and history of the deep breathing technique, and a feature that allows you to set the pace and duration of your breathing exercise regimen. An optional verbal prompt can assist users as they perform their breathing.

A visual aid helps the user to inhale and exhale correctly by following a moving vertical scale and keeps track of time, so that the user can perform the exercises for the correctly allotted period.

Although the application is currently selling at a rate of about 20 a day and their costs are expected to be recouped in about six months, the Khalsas insist that they did not create the application for the money.

"This is our gift to the community," said Carol Khalsa. "In our office, we can reach at most a couple of thousand people a year to let them know about this technique.

"With the application, we can reach untold millions."

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