

**T**he mere sound of a snuffle or a sneeze can put any woman on high health alert during cold and flu season. But these three women, whose work requires direct contact with dozens of germ-carrying clients and children every day, don't think twice about catching the latest bug. What's their secret? *First* asked, and they were happy to share. Here, their tricks of the trade that will keep *you* healthy and productive all season long.

## IMMUNE SECRET:

## A "shining" breath

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As a yoga instructor, I give people hands-on assistance every day. For instance, I might align a student's head with her neck to prevent strain. With so much personal contact, it's easy to get sick. So to stay healthy, I practice a deep-breathing technique called *Kapalabhati* ("shining breath"). I sit tall, eyes closed, and exhale fully. Then I take a deep breath and begin exhaling forcefully through my nose in short quick bursts, taking a small inhalation between each exhale. Each time I breathe out, I contract my abdominal muscles to help propel my breath up and out. After 30 seconds, I take a short break, then repeat the exercise two more times. This draws toxins out of bodily tissues, cleansing the lymphatic system and strengthening immunity. And it's effective: I haven't had a cold since I started daily *Kapalabhati* five years ago!

**Why it works:** The lymphatic system is a network of organs and tissues that produces infection-fighting white blood cells. It also collects bodily fluids that may contain bacteria and viruses. If those toxins build up in the lymph nodes, infection can develop, impairing the system's defenses. "**Lymph vessels don't have an active pump like the heart, so they rely on muscular contractions to remove noxious fluids,**" says Robert M. Freund, M.D., of the Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital in New York City. "Deep breathing activates the diaphragm and abdominal muscles to increase the flow and drainage of fluids in the lymph system."

