

2 more local gov'ts reduce resident tax

With decision, Shima, Yaizu join Yokkaichi, Toba in recognizing importance of seafarers' role in society, economy

Seamen are forced to stay away from their families and overland lives while working at sea for long periods of time as members of oceangoing vessels, deep-sea fishing boats and the like. They cannot even enjoy administrative services, either.

To help those seafarers, the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) has been staging a campaign for a long time now for the implementation of an exclusive taxation system for seafarers. The campaign has been going to widely promote the importance of seafarers in society, and to help secure and develop successors.

As for reductions in the resident tax for seafarers, the cities of Yokkaichi and Toba, both in Mie Prefecture, adopted measures in fiscal 2014 and fiscal 2016, respectively. Their actions gave seafarers a reduction of 50 percent of the per capita rate of their resident taxes.

In fiscal 2020, Shima, another municipality in Mie Prefecture, and Yaizu in Shizuoka Prefecture decided to lower resident tax rates.

The JSU will continue to orchestrate its campaign to encourage other local municipalities to follow the fiscal decisions made by the leaders of the four governments.



Port of Toba in Mie Prefecture



Port of Yokkaichi in Mie Prefecture



Port of Yaizu in Shizuoka Prefecture



Port of Shima in Mie Prefecture

7 dangerous diseases, disorders seafarers should be aware of

Working on ships has its perks, but it's also a well-known fact that working at sea is one of the most hazardous occupations, in regards to personal health and safety concerns of seafarers. Apart from accidents, seafarers are prone to certain serious diseases and health hazards due to the nature of on-board work, change in climatic conditions, type of cargo carried, working hours, materials being handled, epidemic and endemic diseases, personal habits etc.

Although seafarers go through a strict medical test before joining a vessel, it is evident that the life of seafarers is constantly at risk while out at sea and what makes it more worse is the lack of professional medical attendance (doctors) on board.

The following listed diseases/illnesses can commonly affect persons working onboard merchant marine vessels.

1. Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS):

1. Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS):

Hand transmitted vibration is one of the major hazards that several seafarers face during their course of work. Operating power tools such as chipping machine (rust bust), needle guns and hand held grinders is the main reason for such syndrome. Frequent and prolonged exposure to such power tools results in hand-arm vibration syndrome and it may lead to permanent disability if not treated in time. The common symptoms of this hazard are tingling of fingers, numbness and blanching and even pain in the arm and wrist. Lack of awareness and improper guidelines on safe limits of usage or exposure to such tools and machinery, along with other factors such as smoking, circulatory problems and improper diet etc. make seafarers more vulnerable to this disease.

2. Cardio-Vascular Disease (CVD):

Cardio-vascular disease is as

commonly found in the seafaring community as in the general population. Various mortality studies have revealed that the percentage of seafarers who die because of cardio vascular diseases is because of common factors which are a combination of genes, age, smoking and other reasons influenced by conditions aboard such as stress, diet, lack of exercise etc. With minimum number of crew on board ships, multitasking, and lack of leisure and recreation facilities, high stress levels are prevalent among seafarers, which is a major cause for Cardio Vascular diseases. Although medicines such as isosorbidedinitrate, glycerol-trinitrate for acute chest pain and metoprolol tartrate, adrenaline, atropine for heart rhythm disorders are available on board, in case of a severe heart stroke, which requires immediate medical assistance, evacuation to the shore becomes difficult or sometimes impossible, posing

great risk to the lives of seafarers.

3. Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD):

According to a survey conducted by a European based health research facility on board Norwegian and Danish flag offshore vessels mainly (PSV and AHTS), seafarers were reported to suffer from serious disorders related to muscular and skeleton structure of their body. The reason was that as offshore operations are carried out by modern fleets with high end technology and round the clock schedules in all types of weather conditions, many seafarers work on straight 12 hours shift or 6 on 6 off shifts, which leaves them with very less time to do any major physical activities. MSD is a main cause for many seafarers to take longer breaks from sea life, sometimes even leading to disability. As they say prevention is better than cure, exercise and stretching is recommended to prevent Musculo-

skeletal Disorder. Modern ships have good gym facilities but lack of time and motivation is a great challenge faced.

4. Cancer:

1 out of 8 deaths globally is because of cancer and the scenario is getting worse. As far as seafarers are concerned there has also been a gradual increase in various cases of cancers. The most common among them being lungs cancer, renal Cancer, leukaemia and lymphoma. Even though occupational hazardous such as asbestos, benzene, benzidines are being removed or substituted on ships, new potential carcinogens such as beryllium (used on Product tankers), cadmium, lead etc. have been introduced in to the work place. Officers and crew working on both deck and engine fall prey to this deadly disease due to continuous exposure to such toxic substances.

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On-board Exercises

Actress **Kaoru Yumi** presents the **Nishino Breathing Method**

天翔

Tensho—imagine a bird spreading its wings wide to fly in the sky

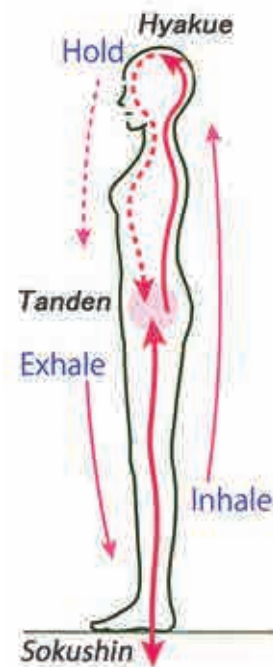
Fully remove tension from your body when bending forward, and rotate your arms so that your palms face upward. When bending backwards, do it slowly, relaxing and expanding your chest, and continue to breathe out. Ideally, hold your position for a few seconds when bending backwards.

As with other sokushin breathing exercises, Tensho also improves blood circulation, effective when you have a backache and/or tend to feel chilly. It is important to do it slowly in a relaxed state.

Points to do 'Sokushin' breathing

Breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Imagine a big tree absorbing water from its roots and deliver to each leaf. Inhale as if breaths were taken from the soles of your feet and up through your knees, thighs, lower abdomen. While keeping attention on your anus lightly, continue to breathe in through your backbone all way to hyakue (the vertex of your head). Then hold your breath lightly until your breathing traverse through your gut. And then take breaths out toward the soles of your feet.

Do not push yourself to trace all the passage with just one breath, you can stop on the way, and breathe several times. Do the Sokushin breathing in a relaxed and a comfortable way.



1. Relax your entire body, with your feet shoulder-width apart. Exhale down toward the soles of your feet.



5. Bend forward all the way. While rotating your arms so your palms face upward, take the breaths out to the bottoms of your feet.



8. Raise your body. Breathe in, to the top of your head, hold it gently, then bring it down to your lower abdomen.



2. While breathing in through your nose using the Sokushin Breathing Method, raise your arms to shoulder height.



6. Raise your body gradually, while breathing in, taking it to the top of your head, holding it gently and then bringing it down to your lower abdomen.



9. Lower your arms slowly, while continuing to breathe out.



3. When breaths are taken up to the top of your head, hold them slowly first, and then bring them down to your lower abdomen. Turn your palms facing upward before starting to breathe out.



7. Bend backwards, while continuing to breathe out. Rotate your palms and spread your arms upward. Take the breaths down to the bottoms of your feet.



10. When the breathing has reached the bottoms of your feet, return to your starting position.



4. While breathing out through your mouth, bend forward. At the same time, rotate your arms to turn your palms over.



蓮行

Rengyo—imagine a bright, colorful image of lotus flowers blooming all together on the blue surface of water

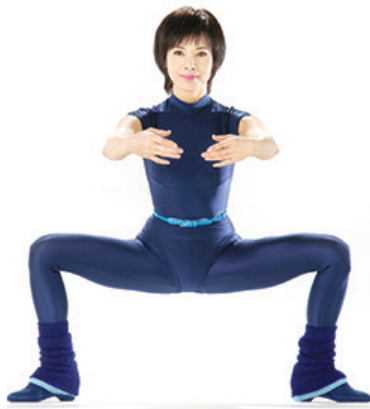
Take deep breaths with the Sokushin Breathing Method using your hands to draw in your breaths. Once the breaths go down to your lower abdomen, bend one knee, and stretch the other leg gently. Relax your upper body as much as possible, and place your palms flat on the floor. Paying attention to the tips of your hands and feet, you can make your body more flexible and move more smoothly.

Rengyo can trim your waist and thighs.

1. Spread your legs nearly as twice as shoulder-width. Breathe out slowly to the bottoms of your feet.



2. While breathing in through your nose using the Sokushin Breathing Method, make a circle with your arms as if you were gently embracing a big tree with them. Squat down at the same time. Bring your breathing to the top of your head, hold it gently then down to your lower abdomen.



3. While breathing out through your mouth, shift your weight to your right.



4. Stretch your left leg gently, and place both hands on the floor as if you were trying to push down a small wooden board floating on the surface of water, feeling resistance from water on your palms. Have the bottom of your left foot on the floor without exertion. Take your breaths out to the bottom of your feet.



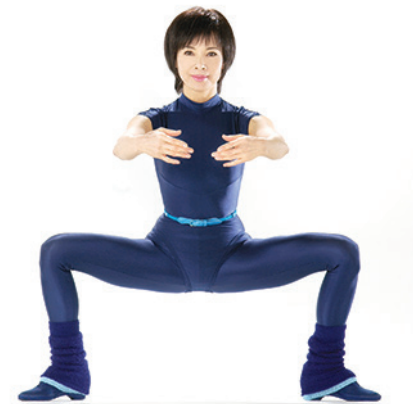
5. While breathing in, point the toes of your left feet upward. Shoot a look at that foot.



6. While continuing to breathe in, raise your arms again as of holding a big tree. Shift your weight back to where it was.



7. When your breathing has reached the vertex of your head, hold it and then take it to your lower abdomen. Repeat the actions (in 3-6) with your right leg. While breathing out, lower your arms slowly. Straighten your knees gradually.



8. Fully breathe out and once it has reached the bottoms of your feet, return to your starting position.



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VOICES from SEAFARERS



C/M Alejandro B. Parba and a crewmember of MV NYK DEMETER

Our wish goes to each and every one to be safe and not be afflicted by serious diseases whether on board and/or elsewhere. Knowing that our love ones are staying at home and are all healthy until this pandemic is over will give us peace of mind while we're at sea.



Officers and crew of MV IKAN KERAS

There's nothing we could offer to our fellow seafarers except a reminder to be aware of this global pandemic. Please set your sail smoothly and be healthy.



Officers and crew of MV NORD HAKATA

Shipshape condition keeps everybody to look sound and healthy. Our team demand and inspire every seafarer for fitness in a bit avoiding the on-going pandemic. Get well everyone!!



Officers and crew of MV KASHIMA MARU

Coronavirus had suddenly surge throughout the globe since last year. Nobody knows when would be the first cure or vaccine will emerge to eradicate this disease into an end. As seafarers who value lives, we encourage everybody to use the appropriate hygienes and protections.



Master and some crewmembers of MV CONCARAN

We are encouraging everybody to observe safety precautions at all times. Likewise, we urge all the seafarers of the world to bolster their immune system and stamina to overcome this pandemic wisely.



Officers and crew of MV OTOTACHIBANA

Our sincere wish is to extend some reminders to seafarers in evading the dreaded pandemic. Please maintain a clean and healthy surroundings. Cleanliness and wearing of protective gears are preliminary defenses to prevent the spread of the disease. Good luck and have a safe voyage.

These occupational hazards demand support for seafarers

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Personnel working on oil, chemical and product tankers are majorly exposed to chemicals and the risk of developing various types of cancer, including brain cancer and leukaemia, is extremely high. Other factors such as smoking, exposure to UV radiation, lack of sleep etc. also aggravate conditions leading to cancer.

5. Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD):

Just like food and water, sex is a basic need of all human beings and seafarers are no different. Traveling to different countries make seafarers vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/ AIDS and venereal diseases like gonorrhea and syphilis.

AIDS is a major concern because it results into serious consequences on both professional and personal life. In recent days, seafarers do not fit the stereo type of having a woman in every port, but owing to long term isolation, lack of leisure and recreation facility and availability of strong sex industry in almost every port of call, seafarers are easily susceptible to unsafe sexual activities and make them a victim of fatal diseases. Creating awareness among seafarers about sexually transmitted disease can minimize and prevent the risk of transmission; however only self-discipline and control can completely eradicate the disease.

6. Pandemic And Epidemic Diseases:

Because of their nature of work, seafarers are bound to visit many ports in different parts of the world and are thus exposed to various pandemic and epidemic diseases such as malaria, cholera, yellow fever, tuberculosis etc. Seafarers are vaccinated and medically checked thoroughly; however they are in major danger of being exposed to sudden outburst of new diseases in areas they visit. An example can be the recent outburst of EBOLA in West African countries.

The best practice for such situations is to use all preventive measures to contain the spread of contagious diseases on board. The master and the crew should be informed about the diseases before docking and restriction of

people embarking the vessel and shore leaves can be effectively controlled to prevent such illness from spreading.

7. Hypertension:

Hypertension is mentioned as one of the major occupation hazards onboard merchant and offshore fleets. Excessive stress, fatigue, loneliness, smoking, consumption of alcohol, lack of physical activity etc. are the main causes for the same. Hypertension can also lead to other illnesses like stroke, renal failure etc. Change in lifestyle and food habits, quitting smoking and alcohol, engaging in physical activities such as exercises, swimming, yoga etc. can reduce hypertension to a great extent.

Given the demanding nature of the work at sea, possibilities of completely eradicating these diseases and disorders is nearly impossible. One should realize that these diseases are the outcome of the work seafarers are involved in.

In many cases in the past, seafarers have been denied compensation for disabilities and death, even though most of the above mentioned diseases are listed by ILO as occupational hazard. It's therefore important that seafarers are provided with all the support in times of such unfortunate situations or events, which has occurred while he or she has been carrying out day to day responsibilities. (Source: Marine Safety, by Dilapan Thomas)