



CHOOSING BREATH

Life's twists are ours to navigate
no AI can breathe for us.

BRETT YEATMAN

BWhyCWhy

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FOREWORD BY BRETT

We don't need to be told to breathe. It's instinctive from the moment we are born. So why have a book teaching us ways to breathe?

The reality is that we are taught to speak, count, translate, manners, posture and even what form to use when we exercise. Yet as children we are not taught to breathe effectively, consciously, for better results. It seems learning Pythagoras' theorem takes precedence over the ability to self-regulate, reduce anxiety, improve mood and even create optimal performance states.

It's a strange system that's been adopted. One where so much needs to change. Where information and education should change systematically and from a fundamental basic level.

We were told to avoid salt.

We were told to eat lots of grains.

We were told to stick to "low fat".

We were told that sugar is no problem, fat was the problem.

We were told to limit meat and eggs.

They said we should eat plant burgers.

We were told that seed oils are healthy.

They said we should drink oat milk.

We were told to avoid the sun.

They were wrong!

We were wrongly informed!

The issues of over consumption of sugars and ultra processed food (watch this space for much more information on this), and basic breathwork are personal soap box platforms for me. Alongside many others like why the over-50's are being discarded and shut out of the workplace. These are all for another time.

For years I have had imposter syndrome wanting to share my journey, learnings, mistakes in a genuine attempt to help, even if only my kids read the books. Yet this imposter syndrome has whispered lies to me constantly for most of my life around "Who do you think you are?" or "Why do you think you have anything special to say?"

The whisper has been replaced by a deafening ongoing scream. It's a time in my life where my soul and entire being are imploring me to do this. It's yelling in my ear to do this. Now.

The obvious place for me to start would be around nutrition, the impact of what we put in our mouth. Because I have spent over 30 years in this business, in helping people make better choices. I think however that before we even choose what we start eating, long before that moment, we breathe. We start making wrong choices because already we are not in optimal state, dealing with issues we don't know how to deal with, and lack the mechanisms to manage them.

Some suggestions on where you should start your own breathwork journey given the many alternative practices available? Here's my best advice. Print the book. Close your eyes. Flip through the pages. Stop at a place that you feel like stopping at. That's the ideal section for you to start with, practice and discover. Let the universe guide you.

If you want to jump straight to the end and discover the "Cheat Sheets" of what conditions are best practiced with which technique, or the techniques linked to benefits... just do that. Whatever makes you feel like you are going to start and not over think this.

"Choosing Breath" is the beginning... the foundation to it all.

It's the start.

I hope you enjoy.

Brett

INTRODUCTION

This book is not about finding the right breathwork technique for you and adopting a method to serve you. That would be like offering a complete workshop of tools to a carpenter and expecting them to choose one to use for all occasions. The point of multiple tools is knowing which one can serve you in different scenarios, and which one is a good idea to incorporate into a daily ritual given your own lifestyle and stresses.

For example, I always try to start my day with a conscious session of Wim-Hof breathing, sitting upright in my spare room to truly activate my mind and get me ready for the day ahead. It sets up my immune system and is enough of a stressor to remind me that I can do hard things and face whatever life throws at me. Before I go to sleep, I often lie in bed and use 4-7-8 as this helps me let go of the clutter, find some quiet while I prepare for my 7-8 hours. Wake up in the middle of the night? That's a box breathing moment. And so it goes. The right tool for the right moment.

Breathing is an intrinsic part of human life, a continuous process that begins at birth and ends at death. Essential for survival, it primarily involves the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Yet, despite its automatic nature, the quality of our breath significantly impacts our physical, emotional, and mental health. Basic breathing, often shallow and unconscious, fails to leverage the full potential of our respiratory system. That's where I found myself a few years ago, aware of how shallow and ineffective my breathing was, out of breath with even some simple tasks. This is where breathwork comes into play—a set of techniques designed to harness the breath's power, enhancing health and well-being.

The Challenge Today

In today's fast-paced world, many people breathe inefficiently. This is often exacerbated by stress, sedentary lifestyles, inflammatory foods (hello sugar) and environmental factors. Modern life and our digital screen obsessions encourage shallow breathing, primarily from the chest rather than the diaphragm, leading to a host of challenges:

- **Increased Stress and Anxiety:** Shallow breathing often triggers the sympathetic nervous system, maintaining a state of heightened alertness and stress.
- **Reduced Oxygen Intake:** Inefficient breathing patterns result in decreased oxygen supply to the body and brain, impairing cognitive function and energy levels.

- Health Issues: Chronic shallow breathing is linked with conditions such as hypertension, fatigue, and insomnia.
- Emotional Imbalance: Poor breathing habits can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and depression, further impacting mental well-being.

The need for conscious breathing practices has never been more critical. Both as daily rituals to start to adapt like brushing our teeth, but also as conscious tools to use when needed. By integrating mindful breathwork into daily life, individuals can address these challenges, optimizing both physiological and psychological health.

The solution lies in adopting a comprehensive approach to breathwork, involving a variety of scientifically-backed breathing techniques. The aim is to replace inefficient patterns with methods that promote relaxation, resilience, and vitality. Key breathwork practices include among others:

- Diaphragmatic Breathing: Encourages deep, belly-based breaths to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system and reduce stress.
- 4-7-8 Breathing: A simple pattern that involves inhaling for 4 seconds, holding for 7 seconds, and exhaling for 8 seconds, which helps to calm the mind and facilitate sleep.
- Box Breathing: Utilized by Navy SEALs, this technique involves equal phases of inhalation, holding, exhalation, and a second hold to enhance focus and stress management.
- Resonant Breathing: Involves maintaining a steady rhythm of 5-6 breaths per minute, optimizing heart rate variability and promoting emotional stability.

These techniques are designed to suit various needs, from reducing anxiety to boosting energy and enhancing mental clarity.

Implementing breathwork into a daily routine involves several steps:

1. Education: Understanding the science and benefits of each technique is crucial. Workshops, online courses, or guided sessions can provide valuable insights.
2. Practice: Regular practice is essential for mastery. Start with short sessions, gradually increasing duration as comfort levels grow.
3. Consistency: Establishing a routine ensures long-term benefits. Integrate breathwork into daily activities, such as morning routines or pre-sleep rituals.
4. Monitoring Progress: Track improvements in stress levels, sleep quality, and overall mood. Journaling can help in identifying patterns and areas of further improvement.

A consistent breathwork practice can lead to measurable health improvements over time, as shown in the hypothetical data table below:

Metric	Before Practice	After 3 Months	After 6 Months
Daily Stress Levels	High	Moderate	Low
Sleep Quality (1-10 Scale)	4	7	9
Energy Levels (1-10 Scale)	5	7	8
Anxiety Episodes per Month	8	4	2

The integration of breathwork into daily life can yield significant positive outcomes:

- **Improved Mental Health:** Regular practice reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, promoting a more balanced emotional state.
- **Enhanced Physical Health:** Breathwork can lower blood pressure, improve lung capacity, and boost overall respiratory efficiency.
- **Increased Productivity:** By enhancing focus and reducing stress, individuals may experience greater productivity and creativity.
- **Reduced Healthcare Costs:** Improved health metrics can lead to fewer medical appointments and medications, decreasing overall healthcare expenses.

In a world where anxiety and depression are on the rise, and many people are disconnected from their own physical processes, breathwork offers a powerful, accessible solution. By consciously harnessing the breath, individuals can transform their health, well-being, and quality of life. The key takeaways from this case study emphasize the importance of awareness, practice, and consistency in overcoming the challenges of modern living. With breathwork, we don't just survive—we thrive, tapping into a reservoir of inner peace and purpose that lies within every breath.

“The breath is the link between mind and body. Master the breath, and you master your life.”

— Thich Nhat Hanh

This book is a comprehensive guide to the world’s most powerful and proven breathwork techniques. Whether you're new to breath training or a seasoned practitioner looking to deepen your understanding, this guide will serve as both a manual and reference companion for your lifelong breathing journey.



What You'll Find in This Book

- 14 core breathing techniques—each with scientific backing, cultural context, and clear step-by-step instructions.
- My own personal insights on that method.
- Visual diagrams to illustrate how to practice properly.
- A curated summary of conditions and symptoms that can be helped through breathwork.
- Insightful quotes from leading experts, yogis, scientists, and practitioners.
- A closing summary to help you choose the right breath for your moment or condition.

From ancient yogic and meditative breathing (Pranayama) to modern nervous system regulation techniques, this book connects East and West, science and spirit, breath and being.

“When you regulate the breath, you regulate the brain. When you regulate the brain, you regulate behavior and physiology.”

— Dr. Richard Gevirtz, HRV researcher

“Your breath is your built-in reset button. It’s free, it’s portable, and it’s always with you.”

— James Nestor, author of *Breath*

A Note to the Reader

No technique in this book is “better” than another. Each has its time, place, and purpose. The invitation is to experiment, explore, and listen. Let this guide be a mirror to your breath, and through it, a mirror to your life.

As you read and practice, keep this mantra in mind:

“Inhale awareness. Exhale resistance. Begin again.”

Let’s begin.

CHAPTER 1: DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

YOUR ANCHOR TO CALM

This particular style is such a great simple starter for anyone who wants to become conscious of their breath. Easy to do, all it takes is the commitment of time set aside to start a journey. A fantastic beginners' breathwork program that can really start to make us feel more present, more in the "now" and also starts to strengthen lungs and our capacity. Simple and easy to do, however also simple and easy not to do.

- Science: Lowers BP/HR, stimulates parasympathetic system, boosts lung efficiency .
- Practice: Lie supine, hand on belly, inhale deeply (belly rises), exhale fully, 5–10 minutes.
- Advocates: Cleveland Clinic encourages for cardiac and stress conditions. Scientifically supported in COPD rehab.

Introduction

In a world dominated by stress and sensory overload, diaphragmatic breathing—also called belly breathing—offers a proven, accessible pathway to balance. Rooted in ancient practices and validated by modern science, this technique restores your connection to the breath, shifts your nervous system into healing mode, and empowers mental clarity.

What Is Diaphragmatic Breathing?

Diaphragmatic breathing involves inhaling deeply so your belly rises as the diaphragm contracts downward, allowing your lungs to expand fully. It contrasts with shallow chest breathing, which activates the stress response.


"Breathing is the remote control of the nervous system."

— Dr. Andrew Huberman, Stanford Neuroscientist

The Science at a Glance

 Nervous System Regulation

This method activates the vagus nerve, lowering heart rate and calming the sympathetic fight-or-flight response.

 Reduces Cortisol & Blood Pressure

Numerous studies show significant drops in cortisol and BP after diaphragmatic training.

♥ Improves Heart Rate Variability (HRV)
 Higher HRV is linked with resilience, longevity, and emotional regulation.

Clinical Backing

- **Frontiers in Psychology (2017):** 8 weeks of deep breathing led to significant reductions in anxiety and improved sustained attention.
- **Johns Hopkins University:** Recommends it for chronic pain, IBS, insomnia, PTSD, and anxiety.
- **American Lung Association:** Advises COPD patients to use diaphragmatic breathing for improved respiratory control.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. **Position:** Sit or lie comfortably with one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
2. **Inhale Slowly:** Through your nose, for ~4 seconds. Feel the belly rise—chest remains still.
3. **Exhale Fully:** Through pursed lips for ~6 seconds. Belly should fall gently.
4. **Repeat:** Begin with 5–10 minutes daily. Increase as needed.

💡 Pro Tip: Sync to 5–6 breaths per minute for maximum benefit (resonant breathing zone).



Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Sleep aid	Activates parasympathetic mode for rest
Public speaking	Reduces cortisol, improves vocal support
Panic attack	Grounds the body, interrupts hyperventilation
Chronic pain	Relaxes tense muscles, calms brain signals
Asthma/COPD	Improves breath efficiency & oxygen exchange

Quotes From the Field

“Inhale confidence, exhale stress. A calm breath is a calm mind.”

— Dr. Patricia Gerbarg, author of *The Healing Power of the Breath*

“If you want to conquer the anxiety of life, live in the moment, live in the breath.”

— Amit Ray, *Mindfulness Living*

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	5 min	2× daily
Intermediate	10 min	Morning & evening
Advanced	20–30 min	Integrate into yoga/meditation

Safety & Modifications

✅ Safe for most people

⚠️ Use caution with:

- Severe COPD (may need practitioner guidance)
- Anxiety episodes that worsen with body focus

Reference Highlights

- Ma, X. et al. (2017). *Frontiers in Psychology*. [Link](#)
- American Lung Association: lung.org
- Johns Hopkins: hopkinsmedicine.org

CHAPTER 2: BOX BREATHING

THE CALM WITHIN THE COUNT

This must be one of my favorites. My 84-year-old mother-in-law Nicky struggles to sleep and often wakes up in the middle of the night worrying about getting back to sleep. I taught her this simple breathing method, and it really helped her lower her anxiety about getting back to sleep and therefore helped her sleep. It's such a great tool to use anytime to help reduce stress and anxiety. A must-have in our coping toolbox to use whenever needed.

- Research: Helps regulate ANS, optimize focus, reduce stress .
- Practice: 4s inhale → 4s hold → 4s exhale → 4s hold; repeat 4–6 cycles.
- Backed By: Used by Navy SEALs & corporate leaders.

Introduction

Box Breathing, also known as Square Breathing, is a simple, structured breathing technique that brings immediate calm and focus. Originally adopted by Navy SEALs and tactical responders, it's now widely used by executives, athletes, and therapists to manage stress and performance anxiety.

“If you can control your breath, you can control your mind.”
— Mark Divine, Former Navy SEAL Commander

What Is Box Breathing?

Box Breathing is a four-phase breath cycle: Inhale – Hold – Exhale – Hold, each lasting the same count (usually 4 seconds). This rhythmic cadence synchronizes the mind and body, grounding attention and easing the nervous system.

The Science at a Glance

Nervous System Regulation

Each hold phase stimulates the baroreflex, calming the vagus nerve and shifting the brain into a focused, parasympathetic state.

Enhances Focus & Resilience

Used in military resilience programs and elite sports for emotional regulation, clarity under pressure, and reducing reactivity.

Improves Heart Rate Variability (HRV)

Research shows box breathing improves HRV, a key marker of adaptability and emotional health.

Clinical Backing

- Journal of Clinical Psychology (2020): Box breathing was associated with significant anxiety reduction in medical workers during high-stress COVID-19 environments.
- Frontiers in Human Neuroscience (2022): Structured breathing increased prefrontal cortex activation, improving working memory and decision-making under stress.
- US Navy SEAL Training Manual: Box breathing is taught as a frontline tool for staying calm in life-or-death operations.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Position: Sit upright or lie down comfortably.
2. Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.
3. Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
4. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds.
5. Hold again for 4 seconds.
6. Repeat the cycle for 4–6 rounds, or up to 5 minutes.

Tip: Visualize a square—each side representing a phase of the breath.

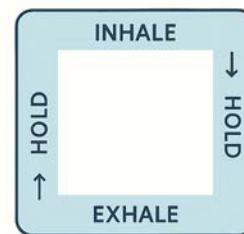
Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Before public speaking	Centers the breath, reduces performance anxiety
In moments of panic or anger	Breaks the emotional chain reaction
To enhance sleep onset	Slows mind racing, eases transition to rest
During work or creative blocks	Increases clarity and flow state access
Before difficult conversations	Promotes empathy and calm assertiveness

BOX BREATHING

Technique Breakdown

1. **Position:** Sit upright or lie down comfortably.
2. **Inhale** through your nose for 4 seconds.
3. **Hold** your breath for 4 seconds.
4. **Exhale** slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds.
5. **Hold** again for 4 seconds.
6. Repeat the cycle for 4–6 rounds, or up to 5 minutes.



💡 Tip: Visualize a square—each side representing a phase of the breath.

Quotes From the Field

“Box breathing is like hitting the reset button for your mind.”

— Dr. Belisa Vranich, Clinical Psychologist & Author

“Calm is contagious. Box breathing is how leaders transmit calm in chaos.”

— Commander Rorke Denver, Navy SEAL

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	2–3 minutes	Once daily or as needed
Intermediate	5–10 minutes	Before stress triggers
Advanced	10–15 minutes	Integrated into meditation, yoga, or recovery

Safety & Modifications

✔ Safe for nearly everyone

⚠ If lightheadedness occurs, reduce breath-hold time to 2–3 seconds.

Reference Highlights

- Brown, R.P., & Gerbarg, P.L. (2005). Clinical applications of breathing techniques. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.*
- Steffen, P. et al. (2022). Box Breathing in Health Professionals During COVID. *Frontiers in Psychology.*
- Naval Special Warfare Command Training Manuals.

CHAPTER 3: 4-7-8 BREATHING

THE NATURAL TRANQUILIZER

One of the most famous, proven and widely spread techniques that delivers simply outstanding results. I personally lean on the 4-7-8 regularly before I need to do a presentation, public speaking or any place where I am expected to perform. It assists me to gain focus, really center my attention and calm the wild horses that often run amok in my head. Because it requires some counting and focus, it distracts the mind from the noise.

- Origin: Dr. Andrew Weil, rooted in pranayama .
- Practice: Inhale 4s, hold 7s, exhale 8s, up to 4 rounds lying/sitting.
- Benefits: Anxiety reduction, faster sleep onset, calm focus.

Introduction

The 4-7-8 Breathing Technique, developed by Dr. Andrew Weil, is a time-tested method for deep relaxation and improved sleep. Based on ancient pranayama practices, it serves as a "natural tranquilizer" for the nervous system—powerful, immediate, and entirely free.

“The single most powerful anti-anxiety technique I know.”
— Dr. Andrew Weil

What Is 4-7-8 Breathing?

4-7-8 Breathing follows a structured rhythm:

- Inhale for 4 seconds
- Hold the breath for 7 seconds
- Exhale for 8 seconds

This extended exhalation slows the heart rate, enhances vagal tone, and creates a strong parasympathetic (rest-and-digest) response in the body.

The Science at a Glance

🧠 Triggers Parasympathetic Nervous System

The long exhale slows brain waves, promoting calm and helping reduce hyperarousal.

😴 Promotes Sleep Onset

By focusing the mind and physically slowing the breath and heart, it quiets the inner chatter that keeps many people awake at night.

 Lowers Cortisol & Blood Pressure

Studies link extended exhalation patterns with a rapid drop in stress hormones and blood pressure.

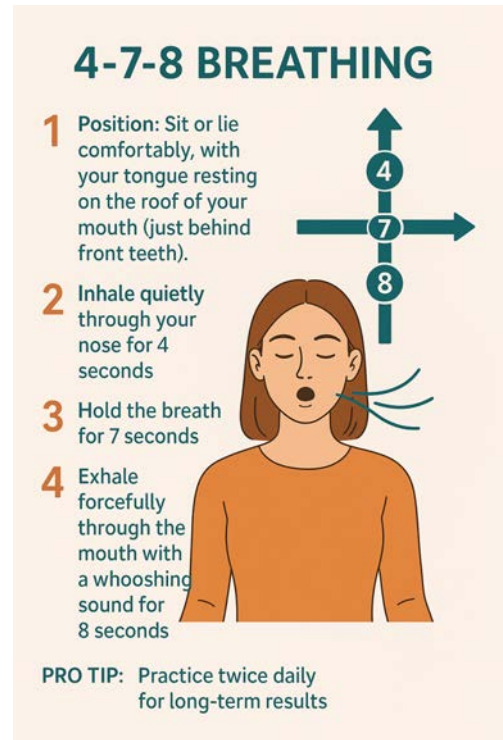
Clinical Backing

- Harvard Medical School (2020): Reports 4-7-8 as a top technique to fall asleep faster due to its effect on the nervous system.
- Frontiers in Psychology (2022): Breathing techniques with extended exhalations significantly reduced state anxiety and resting heart rate.
- Mayo Clinic and Cleveland Clinic: Recommend 4-7-8 for patients experiencing anxiety, panic attacks, and insomnia.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Position: Sit or lie comfortably, with your tongue resting on the roof of your mouth (just behind front teeth).
2. Inhale quietly through your nose for 4 seconds.
3. Hold the breath for 7 seconds.
4. Exhale forcefully through the mouth with a whooshing sound for 8 seconds.
5. Repeat the cycle 4 times to begin; increase to 8 cycles over time.



Pro Tip: Practice twice daily for long-term results.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Difficulty falling asleep	Slows brain waves and heart rate
Stressful meetings or environments	Creates an instant calming effect
During panic attacks	Restores breath control, reduces dizziness
Midday energy crash	Restores oxygen flow and clarity
Emotional regulation	Slows reactions, increases pause between stimulus and response

Quotes From the Field

“If I had to pick just one breathing technique to recommend to everyone, 4-7-8 would be it.”

— Dr. Weil, Integrative Medicine Pioneer

“This breathing exercise is like an off switch for the mind.”

— Calm Clinic Therapist

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	4 cycles	Twice daily
Intermediate	6–8 cycles	After stressful events
Advanced	Combine with meditation or sleep rituals	Nightly

Safety & Modifications

✔ Safe for most individuals

⚠ Those with respiratory conditions or who feel dizzy should shorten the hold to 4–5 seconds.

Reference Highlights

- Weil, A. (2020). 4-7-8 Breathing: A Natural Tranquilizer for the Nervous System.
- Frontiers in Psychology, 2022: Impact of Extended Exhalation on State Anxiety
- Harvard Health Publishing: Relaxation Techniques That Really Work
- Cleveland Clinic: clevelandclinic.org

CHAPTER 4: ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

THE BALANCING BREATH – PRANAYAMA (T.M.)

I was first introduced to pranayama breathing in my Transcendental Meditation Training by Peter and Sue Swan thirty years ago. For me, this is all about re-centering, about balance and karmic energy. It's still the way I start a meditation, with just 2 minutes of pranayama before the meditation (even in the morning, when I meditate after my Wim-Hof breathing "workout", I do pranayama to re-center at the beginning of the meditation). It feels ancient, traditional, almost revered.

- Rationale: Balances left/right hemispheres, reduces stress, heart rate .
- Practice: Close one nostril, inhale, switch, exhale; continue for 5–10 min.
- Traditional Roots: Yoga pranayama—regulates prana/qi.

Introduction

Alternate Nostril Breathing, or Nadi Shodhana, is a centuries-old yogic practice known to bring immediate balance to the body and mind. It quiets the nervous system, clears energetic blockages, and harmonizes the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

"When the breath is unsteady, the mind is unsteady. When the breath is steady, the mind is steady."

— Hatha Yoga Pradipika

What Is Alternate Nostril Breathing?

This technique involves breathing in through one nostril while the other is closed, and then switching sides in a smooth, cyclical pattern. Practitioners report enhanced clarity, focus, emotional calm, and a sense of internal equilibrium.

The Science at a Glance

Left/Right Brain Balance

Studies suggest the technique synchronizes hemispheric activity in the brain, enhancing cognitive flexibility and mental performance.

Parasympathetic Activation

It gently stimulates the vagus nerve, leading to lowered heart rate and blood pressure.

Improved Respiratory Efficiency

Regular use can strengthen nasal breathing patterns and reduce dependency on mouth breathing, improving oxygenation.

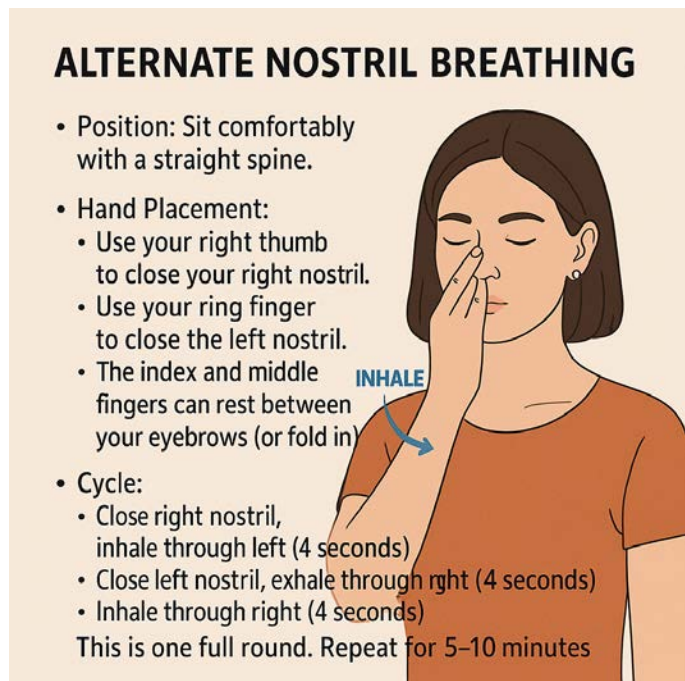
Clinical Backing

- International Journal of Yoga (2011): Found significant reductions in systolic/diastolic blood pressure and pulse rate after 5 minutes of alternate nostril breathing.
- Neurophysiology Journal (2014): EEG scans showed increased alpha wave activity, associated with relaxation and alert awareness.
- Journal of Clinical Psychology (2017): Reported improved attention and emotional regulation in high-stress college students using this technique.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Position: Sit comfortably with a straight spine.
2. Hand Placement:
 - Use your right thumb to close your right nostril.
 - Use your ring finger to close the left nostril.
 - The index and middle fingers can rest between your eyebrows (or fold in).
3. Cycle:
 - Close right nostril, inhale through left (4 seconds)
 - Close left nostril, exhale through right (4 seconds)
 - Inhale through right (4 seconds)
 - Close right, exhale through left (4 seconds)
 - This is one full round. Repeat for 5–10 minutes



Tip: Keep the breath smooth, silent, and equal in duration. No strain.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Pre-meditation or yoga	Clears the mind and grounds energy
Mental fog or fatigue	Restores alertness and balance

Before exams or interviews	Reduces anxiety and boosts cognition
During emotional turbulence	Harmonizes mood and nervous system
End of workday wind-down	Gently transitions from active to restful state

Quotes From the Field

“Alternate Nostril Breathing resets the brain and calms the storms of the mind.”
 — Shiva Rea, Renowned Yoga Teacher

“This practice is one of the most powerful pranayamas to harmonize the dualities within us.”
 — B.K.S. Iyengar, Master of Yoga

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	5 minutes	Daily in the morning or evening
Intermediate	10–15 minutes	Pre-yoga or stress episodes
Advanced	20+ minutes	Integrated with full pranayama sequences

Safety & Modifications

- ✔ Safe for all levels
- ⚠ Skip if congested or experiencing nasal inflammation.
- ✔ Use a tissue or alternate hand if right hand is fatigued.

Reference Highlights

- Telles, S. et al. (2011). Physiological effects of alternate nostril breathing: A review. International Journal of Yoga.
- Bhavanani, A. (2014). Autonomic and EEG responses to pranayama.
- Udupa, K. et al. (2003). Alterations in brain electrical activity following alternate nostril breathing.

CHAPTER 5: PURSED-LIP BREATHING

THE BREATH FOR EASE AND EFFICIENCY

I recommend this so much to so many people I meet. When people are short of breath, breathing very shallow, have been exercising and are breathless. We often focus so much on how deeply we breathe IN, yet there are so many benefits and not enough focus on the exhale, on releasing the breath. Such a great way to increase oxygen efficiency and improve oxygen levels. Release the breath, all of it, without stress or pressure.

- Clinical Use: Recognized by American Lung Association in COPD management .
- Practice: Inhale 2s (nose), exhale 4–6s through pursed lips.
- Benefit: Enhances exhale efficiency—less shortness of breath during exertion.

Introduction

Pursed-lip breathing (PLB) is a simple yet highly effective technique used to control shortness of breath, particularly for those with respiratory conditions like COPD, asthma, or emphysema. It's also helpful during physical exertion and moments of acute stress or anxiety.


“It’s not about how fast you breathe, but how fully you release.”

— American Lung Association

What Is Pursed-Lip Breathing?

This method involves breathing in through the nose and exhaling slowly through pursed lips, like blowing out a candle. It helps regulate breath flow, maintain open airways longer, and increase oxygen exchange.

The Science at a Glance

 Keeps Airways Open Longer

Prolonged exhalation maintains positive airway pressure, preventing airway collapse in obstructive lung diseases.

 Slows Respiratory Rate

By extending the exhale, PLB reduces rapid, shallow breathing and promotes efficient carbon dioxide exchange.

 Lowers Heart Rate and Improves Oxygenation

Research shows that PLB enhances blood oxygen saturation and reduces anxiety-driven hyperventilation.

Clinical Backing

- American Lung Association: Recommends PLB as a core technique for people with COPD and other chronic lung conditions.
- Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation: PLB improves exercise tolerance and decreases dyspnea in heart failure patients.
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI): Lists PLB as an essential component in pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions


1. Relax your shoulders and neck.
2. Inhale slowly through your nose for about 2 seconds.
3. Purse your lips—as if you’re about to whistle or blow out a candle.
4. Exhale slowly and gently through pursed lips for 4 to 6 seconds.
5. Repeat this cycle for several minutes, especially when feeling breathless or anxious.

Tip: Focus on making your exhale twice as long as your inhale.

PURSED LIP BREATHING

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Relax your shoulders and neck.
- Inhale slowly through your nose for about 2 seconds.
- Purse your lips—as if you’re about to whistle or blow out a candle.
- Exhale slowly and gently through pursed lips for 4 to 6 seconds.
- Repeat this cycle for several minutes, especially when feeling breathless or anxious.



Tip: Focus on making your exhale twice as long as your inhale.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
During exertion (e.g. walking stairs)	Prevents breathlessness and keeps airways open
COPD, asthma, emphysema	Reduces air trapping, improves ventilation
Panic or anxiety attacks	Restores control and slows hyperventilation
Cardiac rehab or post-exercise	Enhances recovery and lowers oxygen demand
Yoga and stretching routines	Deepens exhale, enhances body relaxation

Quotes From the Field

“Exhaling with pursed lips is like letting pressure out of a balloon gradually—calmly and efficiently.”

— Pulmonology Nurse Educator, Mayo Clinic

“It’s like whispering to your nervous system: ‘You’re safe now.’”

— Breathing Coach, Pulmonary Rehab Center

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	3–5 minutes	When feeling short of breath
Intermediate	10 minutes	Before/after physical activity
Advanced	Combine with movement, walking, or strength routines	

Safety & Modifications

✅ Safe for most individuals

✓ Recommended by respiratory therapists

⚠️ Do not force the breath—exhaling should be gentle, not strained

Reference Highlights

- American Lung Association: Living with COPD and Breathing Tips
- NHLBI: Pulmonary Rehabilitation Tools and Techniques
- Mahler DA. (1999). COPD rehabilitation and pursed-lip breathing. *Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation*.
- Mayo Clinic: Pulmonary Health and Breath Control Exercises

CHAPTER 6: LION'S BREATH

THE FIERCE RELEASE

This practice is so active and animated, it's just amazing fun to use. I find it's a conscious decision to break a pattern, to change state, to get into or out of a mental situation. And it's enormously funny to see the reactions of people when you do it in a crowded space. I recently found myself quite grumpy and tense after a particularly tough zoom call, so that's when a truly active process like Lion's Breath works for me. To break the pattern. Snap out of it.

- Rationale: Physical tension release, stimulating jaw muscles ().
- Practice: Sit, inhale deeply, open mouth, stick tongue out, exhale forcefully "haaa," repeat 3–5 times.

Introduction

Lion's Breath, or Simha Pranayama, is one of yoga's most expressive and energetic breathing techniques. It combines audible exhalation, facial activation, and visual intensity to release inner tension, clear emotional residue, and awaken confidence.

"Breathe like a lion, and you'll silence your inner critic."

— Shiva Rea

What Is Lion's Breath?

Lion's Breath involves a powerful exhale with the mouth open, tongue extended, and a "haaa" sound as if fogging a mirror. It is often practiced with wide-open eyes, enhancing the mind-body connection and emotional release.

The Science at a Glance

Activates Vagus Nerve Through Vocalization

The forceful exhale and sound stimulate the vagus nerve, calming the nervous system while energizing the body.

Emotional & Physical Tension Release

Involves facial muscles, jaw, and throat—regions that store tension due to stress or suppressed emotion.

Enhances Confidence and Mental Clarity

The bold physical expression fosters embodied courage, helpful in combatting social anxiety and hesitation.

Clinical & Anecdotal Backing

- Yoga Therapy Research: Lion’s Breath is recognized for aiding in stress reduction, jaw tension, and vocal release.
- Body Psychotherapy: Techniques involving expressive sound and facial gestures are known to enhance emotional catharsis and self-expression.
- Anecdotal Reports: Practitioners use it to break mental stagnation, relieve frustration, and invigorate the breath-body system.



Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sit comfortably in a kneeling, cross-legged, or chair position.
2. Inhale deeply through the nose.
3. Exhale forcefully through the mouth while:
 - a. Sticking your tongue out as far as possible
 - b. Making a “haaa” sound from the throat
 - c. Opening the eyes wide, optionally gazing at the third eye (between eyebrows)
4. Repeat 3 to 5 times, rest, then do another round if needed.

Tip: Try this in private first to fully express without self-consciousness.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Jaw tension or teeth grinding	Engages and releases facial muscles
Emotional frustration or anger	Channels energy outward safely
Pre-performance or public speaking	Builds vocal power and presence
Morning energy boost	Clears stagnation and energizes the diaphragm
Overthinking or looping thoughts	Disrupts mental spirals with embodied presence

Quotes From the Field

“This breath is not just about letting go. It’s about reclaiming your roar.”

— Seane Corn, Yoga Activist

“When your inner lion speaks, doubt goes quiet.”

— Anonymous Practitioner

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	3 breaths	As needed
Intermediate	5 rounds	After seated meditation
Advanced	10–15 rounds	As part of expressive therapy or morning routine

Safety & Modifications

- ✔ Safe for all fitness levels
- ✔ Use a mirror to enhance facial expression
- ⚠ Skip eye-widening if you have eye conditions (e.g. glaucoma)

Reference Highlights

- Yoga International: The Benefits of Simhasana Breath
- IAYT (International Assoc. of Yoga Therapists): Pranayama and Emotional Health
- Body-Centered Psychotherapy Manuals

CHAPTER 7: RESONANT BREATHING

THE RHYTHMIC RESET

Reset! Control, Alt, Delete. Slow and Steady wins the race. Emotional resets and emotional settling, synchronizing mind, body and spirit. This is all about balance, about reconnecting to core.

- Science: Maximizes heart rate variability, calms nervous system .
- Practice: Breathe at ~5-6 breaths per minute (5s in, 5s out) for 10 min.
- Use: Ideal for stress management, mental resilience.

Introduction

Resonant Breathing (or Coherent Breathing) is a slow and rhythmic breath practice that aligns your respiratory rate with your heart rate variability (HRV) to promote emotional regulation, mental clarity, and cardiovascular health. It's one of the most evidence-backed techniques for stress resilience and autonomic balance.

“Resonant breathing harmonizes the rhythm of the heart, breath, and brain.”

— Dr. Richard Gevirtz, Biofeedback Expert


What Is Resonant Breathing?

This technique involves breathing at a steady rate of 5–6 breaths per minute, with equal inhale and exhale lengths (usually around 5 seconds each). It’s known to induce a coherent physiological state where heart rate variability (HRV) and respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA) reach optimal synchrony.

The Science at a Glance

 Enhances Heart Rate Variability (HRV)

HRV is a strong predictor of resilience, longevity, and emotional regulation. Resonant breathing increases HRV by activating the baroreflex, a cardiovascular balancing mechanism.

 Calms the Mind

Breathing at this pace slows brain waves, increases alpha wave activity, and shifts the body into a parasympathetic state.

 Improves Blood Pressure and Sleep Quality

Multiple studies show benefits for hypertension, insomnia, and mood disorders.

Clinical Backing

- Harvard Medical School & HeartMath Institute: Strong evidence supporting its effect on HRV improvement, emotional regulation, and performance under pressure.
- Frontiers in Human Neuroscience (2022): Practicing resonant breathing for just 10 minutes a day improved executive function and working memory.
- Journal of Clinical Psychology (2017): Effective for patients with anxiety, depression, and PTSD when paired with biofeedback.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sit or lie comfortably in a quiet space.
2. Inhale slowly for 5 seconds (nose).
3. Exhale slowly for 5 seconds (mouth or nose).
4. Continue this 10-second cycle for 5–15 minutes.
5. Use a timer or app with audio pacing (e.g., Breathwrk, Breathe+, HeartMath).

Tip: Count silently or visualize a wave rising and falling to maintain rhythm.



Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Emotional turbulence or stress	Balances autonomic nervous system
Before important conversations	Increases composure and clarity
Daily recovery routine	Reduces systemic inflammation and HR
Sleep preparation	Induces calm and improves circadian rhythm
Cardiovascular health	Activates baroreflex and improves HRV

Quotes From the Field

“Resonant breathing is like cardio for your nervous system.”

— Dr. Stephen Elliott, Developer of Coherent Breathing

“The quickest path to peace is five breaths a minute.”

— Dr. Leah Lagos, HRV Biofeedback Researcher

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	5 minutes	Once daily
Intermediate	10 minutes	Twice daily
Advanced	15–20 minutes	Before performance, meditation, or sleep

Safety & Modifications

✓ Safe for all levels

✓ Can be done seated, lying down, or while walking

⚠ Those with dizziness or cardiovascular conditions should consult a physician when using extended sessions or paired with biofeedback

Reference Highlights

- Lehrer, P.M., & Gevirtz, R. (2014). Resonance frequency breathing and HRV biofeedback: A review. *Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback*.
- HeartMath Institute: Coherence and Performance in Health and Education.
- *Frontiers in Psychology* (2022): Effects of 6-bpm breathing on stress biomarkers and cognition.

CHAPTER 8: BHASTRIKA

THE BREATH OF FIRE AND POWER

This is not calming! This is activating and preparing for the battle. Flooding the body with oxygen in preparation to handle almost anything. When I need the “oomph” to get ready for the workout, or before a game of volleyball, even if I know I am going to have to face a formidable challenge in the boardroom, Bhastrika is the go-to game. Clear away everything except the internal fire to tackle the situation in front of me.

- Effect: Rapid diaphragmatic pulses—mentally energizing.
- Practice: 20 quick belly breaths per round, 3 rounds with rest.
- Use: Morning energy, alertness boost.

Introduction

Bhastrika Pranayama, known as Bellows Breath, is an energizing and vigorous breathing technique rooted in ancient yogic traditions. It is designed to ignite internal heat, clear mental fog, and stimulate the nervous and circulatory systems—like fanning the embers of a fire.

“Bhastrika is the yogic espresso shot—pure energy, no caffeine required.”
— Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar

What Is Bhastrika?

Bhastrika involves rapid, forceful inhales and exhales using the diaphragm, with both inhale and exhale being equally forceful. The breath mimics a blacksmith’s bellows—filling the lungs with oxygen and releasing it with explosive energy.

The Science at a Glance

 Increases Oxygen Saturation

High-frequency breathing floods the body with oxygen, enhancing energy, alertness, and circulation.

 Activates Sympathetic Nervous System (Short-Term)

Unlike other calming techniques, Bhastrika is activating—stimulating adrenal response and mental clarity.

 Strengthens Diaphragm and Lung Capacity

The forceful breath engages core and respiratory muscles, making it ideal for lung training and fitness enhancement.

Clinical & Experimental Backing

- Indian Journal of Medical Research (2009): Found improved pulmonary function and cognitive speed in healthy adults after 30 days of Bhastrika practice.
- International Journal of Yoga (2011): Demonstrated significant increase in vital capacity and peak expiratory flow rate among yoga practitioners.
- Anecdotal & Therapeutic Use: Used in Ayurvedic detox programs, pre-performance routines, and morning wake-up sequences.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sit in a comfortable upright position (cross-legged or on a chair).
2. Take a deep breath in through the nose.
3. Begin rapid, forceful inhales and exhales through the nose—using the diaphragm (1 second per breath).
4. Complete 10–20 rapid breaths, then inhale deeply and hold for a few seconds before exhaling slowly.
5. Rest and repeat up to 3 rounds.



Tip: Movement of the belly should be visible—expand on inhale, contract on exhale.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Morning energy boost	Activates body and mind instantly
Mental fog or fatigue	Increases oxygenation and alertness
Cold or respiratory congestion	Clears sinuses and opens airways
Before workouts or yoga	Primes breath and strengthens diaphragm
Mood enhancement	Stimulates dopamine and vitality hormones

Quotes From the Field

“Bhastrika breath brings forth your inner fire and vitality.”

— Swami Sivananda

“You cannot feel low after 30 seconds of Bhastrika—it resets your entire state.”

— Yogic Therapist, Art of Living Foundation

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	10 breaths × 2 rounds	Morning only
Intermediate	20 breaths × 3 rounds	Before activity or mid-day slump
Advanced	Combine with retention and bandhas (locks)	In structured pranayama session

Safety & Modifications

⚠ Not suitable for:

- Heart conditions
- High blood pressure
- Vertigo or epilepsy
- Pregnancy

✅ Always begin slowly; sit down and stop if dizzy.

✓ Best practiced on an empty stomach or at least 2 hours after eating.

Reference Highlights

- Madanmohan et al. (2009). Effect of yogic breathing on pulmonary functions in healthy young volunteers. Indian Journal of Medical Research.
- Telles, S. et al. (2011). Bhastrika practice and its impact on cognition and breath-holding. International Journal of Yoga.
- Bihar School of Yoga: Prana, Pranayama, and the Yogic Body Map.

CHAPTER 9: HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK

BREATHING BEYOND THE SELF

We have to tread carefully with this one. I was at a retreat where a facilitator decided to “play” with holotropic breathwork and a group of sixteen- and seventeen-year-old school kids. The facilitator created a curated music playlist with suggestions from ChatGPT, connected two strong Bluetooth speakers in the room, got everyone lying down in a circle and off she went. It didn’t take long before there were some real tears from a few people, unprepared for emotional tsunami that rocked them from the combination of the intense breathwork, eyes blocked out, intense music and group dynamic. I prefer to think of this as therapy and healing than a simple breathwork technique. Stick to people with experience, and with a guide.

- Proponent: Grof & Grof; emotionally intense, requires facilitator.
- Effects: Emotional catharsis, altered states, potential spiritual insight.
- Caution: Not for heart, BP conditions; needs professional context.

Introduction

Holotropic Breathwork is an intense, deep-reaching technique designed to access non-ordinary states of consciousness, emotional healing, and spiritual insight. Developed by psychiatrist Dr. Stanislav Grof and Christina Grof in the 1970s, this practice is grounded in transpersonal psychology and is often conducted in a therapeutic or ceremonial setting.

“In deep breath lies the gateway to the unconscious, the unspoken, and the divine.”
— Dr. Stanislav Grof

What Is Holotropic Breathwork?

Holotropic Breathwork uses fast, deep, circular breathing, evocative music, and non-directive facilitation to guide individuals into altered states for emotional release, self-discovery, and even spiritual awakening.

The Science at a Glance

Alters Brainwave States

The sustained rapid breath shifts the brain from beta to theta/delta waves, similar to those found in deep meditation, REM sleep, or psychedelic states.

Increases CO₂ Tolerance

Intense breathing alters blood gas levels, which modulates consciousness and perception.

🌀 **Induces Catharsis & Integration**

Many report emotional breakthroughs, trauma processing, and archetypal visions akin to psychedelic therapy.

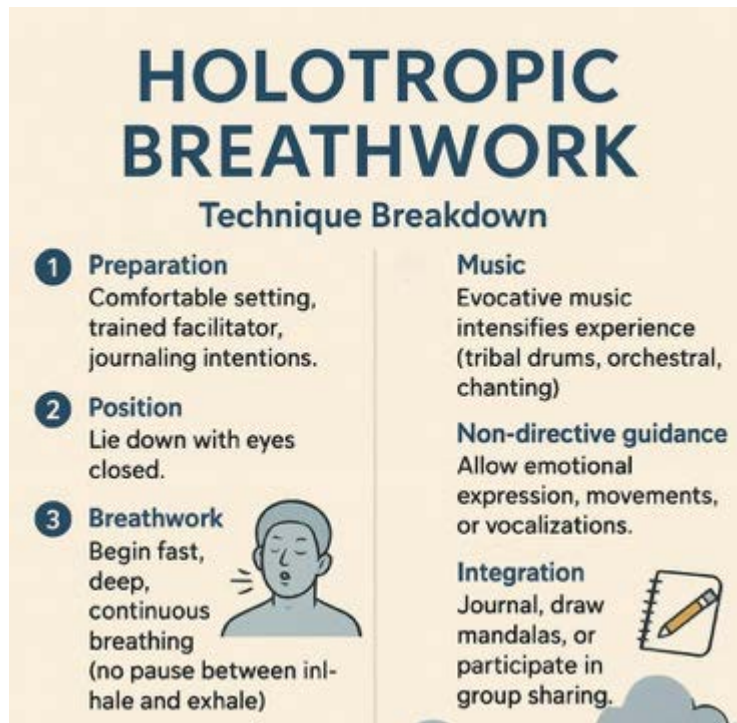
Clinical & Historical Backing

- Grof Transpersonal Training has trained thousands of facilitators worldwide since the 1980s.
- Studies suggest Holotropic sessions may improve emotional regulation, trauma integration, and personal meaning.
- Currently considered a legal and accessible alternative to psychedelic-assisted therapy.

Technique Breakdown

◆ **Step-by-Step Session Format**

1. Preparation: Comfortable setting, trained facilitator, journaling intentions.
2. Position: Lie down with eyes closed.
3. Breathwork: Begin fast, deep, continuous breathing (no pause between inhale and exhale).
4. Music: Evocative music intensifies experience (tribal drums, orchestral, chanting).
5. Non-directive guidance: Allow emotional expression, movements, or vocalizations.
6. Integration: Journal, draw mandalas, or participate in group sharing.



Sessions typically last 2–3 hours and require post-session grounding and rest.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Deep emotional trauma	Accesses subconscious content safely

Personal transformation journeys	Offers profound insight and breakthroughs
Creative blocks	Unlocks archetypal and intuitive processing
Spiritual seekers	Fosters unity consciousness and transpersonal awareness
Complement to therapy	Amplifies and accelerates integration work

Quotes From the Field

“Holotropic Breathwork is not about escape. It’s about meeting yourself completely.”
 — Christina Grof

“The psyche, when opened, reveals layers of the cosmos and the soul.”
 — Participant reflection

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Guided	2–3 hours	1–2x per month
Solo Practice (not recommended)	Shortened, modified	With experience only
Aftercare	Journaling, rest, discussion	Essential

Safety & Modifications

⚠️ Contraindicated for:

- Pregnancy
- Epilepsy or seizure history
- Cardiovascular conditions
- Severe mental illness (e.g., psychosis, schizophrenia)

✅ Must be done with trained facilitators and in a safe, supportive space.

Reference Highlights

- Grof, S. (1985). Beyond the Brain: Birth, Death and Transcendence in Psychotherapy
- Holmes, J. (1993). Altered states of consciousness through breathwork: Potential risks and benefits
- International Breathwork Foundation: Ethics and Safety in Holotropic Sessions

CHAPTER 10: BIODYNAMIC BREATHWORK

BREATH, BODY & RELEASE

When there is a great fire, a beautiful sky at night, and space to move, few things can be as liberating and joyful as biodynamic breathwork. It's the psychedelic release without the magic medicines. Or with them. It's an unfiltered release of the human spirit, dancing like nobody is watching, while consciously engaging in deep rhythmic breathing and movement. I can be self-conscious of myself, so this is a great way to get out of my own head and stop taking myself so seriously.

- Approach: Integrative, trauma-release method with movement & sound .
- Goal: Access & discharge stored bodily tension and emotion.
- Support: Used in body-psychotherapy and trauma-sensitive settings.

Introduction

Biodynamic Breathwork is a trauma-informed, body-centered healing modality that integrates breath, movement, sound, and emotional expression to release stored tension, trauma, and stagnant energy. Developed by Giten Tonkov, it is a powerful method of unfreezing patterns held in the body-mind system.

“Trauma is not just in the mind—it’s held in the body. Breath is the bridge to free it.”
— Giten Tonkov

What Is Biodynamic Breathwork?

This technique involves conscious connected breathing combined with dynamic movement, vocal release, and somatic awareness. Unlike passive breathing methods, it encourages active expression and physical engagement to unlock stored emotional and muscular patterns.

The Science at a Glance

 Integrates Polyvagal Theory

Targets the autonomic nervous system—specifically dorsal vagal and sympathetic freeze states—to support nervous system regulation and trauma resolution.

 Discharges Stored Tension

Mobilizes muscular armor, fascial tension, and somatic holding patterns that traditional talk therapy may not reach.

🌀 Enhances Emotional Intelligence

Promotes emotional fluidity, body literacy, and the capacity for safe expression and grounding.

Clinical Backing

- Based on the work of Wilhelm Reich, Peter Levine, and Stephen Porges.
- Utilized in trauma therapy, somatic experiencing, and psycho-emotional bodywork.
- Studies show body-centered breath therapies improve PTSD, anxiety, depression, and increase body-mind integration.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Framework

BIODYNAMIC BREATHWORK

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Framework

- **Breath:** Deep, rhythmic connected breathing (no pause between inhale and exhale).
- **Movement:** Gentle shaking, stretching, or flowing motions.
- **Sound:** Use vocalization—toning, sighs, or expressive sound to release.
- **Emotional Expression:** Allow emotions to surface and move without judgment.
- **Somatic Awareness:** Sense tension patterns, sensations, and energetic flow.
- **Integration:** Journaling, resting, drawing, or therapeutic dialogue.

1. **Breath:** Deep, rhythmic connected breathing (no pause between inhale and exhale).
2. **Movement:** Gentle shaking, stretching, or flowing motions.
3. **Sound:** Use vocalization—toning, sighs, or expressive sound to release.
4. **Emotional Expression:** Allow emotions to surface and move without judgment.
5. **Somatic Awareness:** Sense tension patterns, sensations, and energetic flow.
6. **Integration:** Journaling, resting, drawing, or therapeutic dialogue.

Sessions can last from 45 minutes to 2 hours, ideally with a trained practitioner.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Unprocessed trauma or grief	Allows safe somatic release

Persistent tension or chronic pain	Relieves muscular and energetic holding patterns
Emotional numbness or overreaction	Restores natural expression and balance
Creative or relational blockages	Opens body channels for flow and resonance
Personal growth journeys	Deepens embodiment and inner connection

Quotes From the Field

“This work speaks to the body in a way words never can.”
 — Somatic Breath Facilitator

“Inhale presence, exhale permission. Let your body lead.”
 — Participant reflection

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	30–45 minutes	Weekly with practitioner
Intermediate	60 minutes	Bi-weekly or structured program
Advanced	90+ minutes	Integrated into trauma recovery journey

Safety & Modifications

- ⚠ Practice with care for:
 - Unprocessed trauma
 - Dissociation or extreme emotional dysregulation
 - Pregnancy or recent surgeries
- ✅ Best done with a certified facilitator
- ✓ Emphasizes consent, boundaries, and self-regulation

Reference Highlights

- Tonkov, G. (2019). Feel to Heal: Releasing Trauma Through Biodynamic Breathwork and Somatic Awareness
- Levine, P. (1997). Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma
- Porges, S. (2011). The Polyvagal Theory

CHAPTER 11: BUTEYKO METHOD

THE BREATH OF CONTROL AND CALM

Not only is nose breathing just hugely beneficial, but mouth breathing is a disaster and causes so many health issues. Nose breathing improves quality of breathing, builds nitric oxide in the body and is something we all should be paying attention to. Ensure we deliberately and intentionally improve our nose breathing. Buteyko brings me to a fantastic place, with thoughts of Simon & Garfunkel as they so eloquently sang *“Slow down; you move too fast; You got to make the morning last; Just kicking down the cobble stones; Looking for fun and feeling groovy. Ba da-da da-da da-da, feeling groovy”*.

- Claim: Treats hyperventilation, asthma via breath-hold & nasal breathing .
- Evidence: Mixed; some small studies show asthma QOL improvement.
- Practice: Reduced-tidal breathing, control pause measurement.

Introduction

Developed by Ukrainian doctor Konstantin Buteyko in the 1950s, the Buteyko Method is a clinically recognized technique designed to improve breath efficiency, reduce over-breathing, and manage conditions like asthma, anxiety, and sleep apnea. It emphasizes nasal breathing, breath-holding, and developing CO₂ tolerance.

“Breathe less to breathe better.”

— Dr. Konstantin Buteyko

What Is the Buteyko Method?

Buteyko aims to retrain dysfunctional breathing habits by:

- Encouraging nose-only breathing
- Reducing respiratory rate
- Using controlled breath-holds (called Control Pauses) to restore sensitivity to carbon dioxide and balance oxygen uptake.

The Science at a Glance

 Reduces Hyperventilation

Over-breathing depletes CO₂, leading to blood vessel constriction. Buteyko corrects this, improving oxygen delivery to tissues.

 Calms the Nervous System

By slowing the breath and extending the exhalation, Buteyko promotes parasympathetic activation and reduces symptoms of anxiety and panic.

 Improves Respiratory Efficiency

Clinical research shows it helps manage asthma, COPD, and exercise-induced bronchospasm.

Clinical Backing

- Cochrane Review (2009): Buteyko showed improved asthma control and reduced bronchodilator use.
- British Thoracic Society Guidelines: Recommends Buteyko for asthma management.
- Buteyko Clinic International (Ireland): Trained thousands of practitioners worldwide.

BUTEYKO METHOD

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Sit upright in a relaxed posture.
- Breathe in gently through your nose for 2–3 seconds.
- Exhale slowly through your nose for 3–5 seconds.
- After exhale, hold your breath and gently pinch your nose.
- Control Pause: Time how long before you feel the urge to breathe.
- Breathe gently and return to normal breathing. Repeat cycle.



Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sit upright in a relaxed posture.
2. Breathe in gently through your nose for 2–3 seconds.
3. Exhale slowly through your nose for 3–5 seconds.
4. After exhale, hold your breath and gently pinch your nose.
5. Control Pause: Time how long before you feel the urge to breathe.
6. Breathe gently and return to normal breathing. Repeat cycle.

Goal: Increase your Control Pause time over days and weeks, aiming for 30–40 seconds or more.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Asthma or wheezing	Improves airway sensitivity and reduces over-breathing
Anxiety and panic attacks	Slows breath rate and enhances CO ₂ tolerance
Mouth breathing correction	Promotes nasal function and nitric oxide production
Snoring and sleep apnea	Supports better night-time breathing
Exercise performance	Builds respiratory endurance and CO ₂ resilience

Quotes From the Field

“With the Buteyko method, I reduced my asthma medication by 80%.”

— Asthma Patient, Clinical Study Participant

“Breathe light, to breathe right.”

— Patrick McKeown, Buteyko Instructor & Author

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	5-minute sessions	2–3× daily
Intermediate	10-minute sessions	Before sleep or exercise
Advanced	20 minutes with tracking	Daily, integrated into routine

Safety & Modifications

✔ Safe with supervision

⚠ Caution for people with:

- Untreated hypertension
- Pregnancy
- Serious cardiovascular conditions

✔ Recommended to start under a qualified Buteyko practitioner

✔ Best practiced in a quiet space with a timer and nasal breathing awareness

Reference Highlights

- McKeown, P. (2015). The Oxygen Advantage
- Bowler, S. et al. (1998). Buteyko breathing technique in asthma: A blinded randomized study.
- British Thoracic Society Asthma Guidelines
- Buteyko Clinic International: Practitioner Education and Clinical Resources

CHAPTER 12: ĀNĀPĀNASATI

THE BREATH OF PRESENCE

Meditation in breath. Doing nothing except breathing. That's Ānāpānasati. So often I hear "I can't meditate" or even more oddly "I don't meditate". Well, if you can breathe, then you can meditate and get all the many documented and proven benefits of meditation. No judgement. No need to "perfect" the technique. No need to get it right. Just to notice. Dissolve the thoughts as they arrive like clouds in the sky, by simply gently focusing only on the rhythm of the in, out, in, out with no expectation of what it should sound like, feel like or how long each breath should be.

- Research: Enhances attention networks, emotional regulation .
- Practice: Sit calmly; observe breath without control; return attention when drifting.
- Use: Core of mindfulness, easily accessible.

Introduction

Ānāpānasati, which means "mindfulness of breathing," is a foundational practice in Buddhist meditation, originally taught by the Buddha over 2,500 years ago. It is a gentle yet profound technique that involves observing the natural breath as a gateway to awareness, clarity, and insight.

"Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I smile."

— Thich Nhat Hanh

What Is Ānāpānasati?

Unlike breathing methods that manipulate the breath, Ānāpānasati is about simply observing the breath. You bring non-judgmental attention to the inhale and exhale, noticing sensations, thoughts, emotions, and distractions without reacting.

The Science at a Glance

 Increases Mindfulness and Attention

Improves prefrontal cortex activity, supporting focus, emotional regulation, and metacognition.

 Reduces Rumination and Anxiety

Shifting attention to the breath creates distance from obsessive thought loops, increasing present-moment awareness.

 Modulates Stress Markers

Practicing breath awareness lowers cortisol, heart rate, and symptoms of depression and PTSD.

Clinical Backing

- Harvard and Oxford Mindfulness Studies: Breath-focused meditation enhances attentional control and emotional balance.
- JAMA Psychiatry (2014): Mindfulness-based breath practices reduce relapse rates in depression.
- Neuroscience of Mindfulness Review (2020): Breath awareness modulates default mode network and limbic overactivity.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sit in a comfortable upright position, eyes closed or softly focused.
2. Bring full attention to the sensation of breath entering and exiting the nostrils, or the rise and fall of the belly.
3. Do not try to change the breath—just observe it as it is.
4. When the mind wanders (and it will), gently return to the breath without judgment.
5. Continue for 5 to 20 minutes, gradually increasing over time.

Tip: Use the mental note “in” on the inhale, “out” on the exhale to anchor attention.

ĀNĀPĀNASATI

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Sit in a comfortable upright position, eyes closed or softly focused.
- Bring full attention to the sensation of breath entering and exiting the nostrils, or the rise and fall of the belly.
- Do not try to change the breath—just observe it as it is.
- When the mind wanders (and it will), gently return to the breath without judgment.
- Continue for 5 to 20 minutes, gradually increasing over time.
- ◆ Tip: Use the mental note “in” on the inhale, “out” on the exhale to anchor attention.



Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Stress or overwhelm	Returns awareness to the present moment
Racing thoughts or anxiety	Anchors the mind to a simple, neutral focus
Daily meditation	Core technique for concentration and insight
Emotional reactivity	Creates pause between stimulus and response
Spiritual development	Builds foundations for Vipassana and Zen practices

Quotes From the Field

“Peace is present right here and now, in the breath.”

— Thich Nhat Hanh

“This breath is always available. It is your home.”

— Jack Kornfield

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	5 minutes	Morning or evening
Intermediate	10–15 minutes	Daily
Advanced	20+ minutes	Integrated with walking or seated meditation

Safety & Modifications

- ✔ Extremely safe for all ages and conditions
- ✔ Can be done lying down, sitting, or walking
- ⚠ Beginners may become distracted or frustrated—treat these moments as part of the training

Reference Highlights

- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever You Go, There You Are*
- Thich Nhat Hanh (1990). *The Miracle of Mindfulness*
- Chiesa, A. & Serretti, A. (2009). Mindfulness-based interventions: A meta-analysis
- JAMA Psychiatry (2014). Mindfulness meditation and mental health

CHAPTER 13: REVERSE BREATHING

THE INNER POWER OF PARADOX

I think we all have a secret rebel inside us. I know I certainly do. So often when we are told what to do, we want to do exactly the opposite just to prove a point. Reverse breathing allows that release, but in the coolest Bruce Lee, Kung Fu, Samurai Ninja way. It requires practice. It requires consciously thinking about the process, so it's not something we just do while we are casually doing something else. This is about building Zen-like strength in mind and body. About centering the core on our purpose, our ikigai, our meaning and direction in life.

- Style: Diaphragm training and energy cultivation.
- Practice: Contract abdomen on inhale, expand chest; reverse on exhale.
- Benefit: Improves posture, inner calm, martial discipline.

Introduction

Reverse Breathing is a foundational technique in Qigong, Tai Chi, and Daoist internal alchemy. Unlike natural (diaphragmatic) breathing, it deliberately reverses the abdominal pattern: contracting the belly on inhale and relaxing it on exhale. This practice is said to enhance Qi (life energy) circulation, build inner strength, and stabilize the mind-body connection during movement.

“Where attention goes, energy flows. Reverse breathing gathers energy inward.”
— Master Mantak Chia

What Is Reverse Breathing?

In traditional breathwork, the belly expands during inhale. In reverse breathing, the abdomen pulls in on inhale to draw energy up, while the chest expands, and then relaxes on exhale. This creates a strong internal pressure cycle believed to stimulate Qi and tone the internal organs.

The Science & Energetics

🌀 Stimulates Core and Diaphragm Control

Enhances intra-abdominal pressure and strengthens deep core musculature.

🧠 Sharpens Mental Focus and Stability

Used in Tai Chi and martial arts to center the mind and build rooted presence.

⚡ Promotes Qi Flow and Internal Circulation

Energetically believed to gather, compress, and move life force (Qi) through meridians and energy centers.

Traditional Backing

- Taught in ancient Daoist and Shaolin practices as a method to build internal power and stillness in motion.
- Mentioned in Tao Te Ching and classic Qigong texts.
- Still used widely in martial arts, meditative healing forms, and longevity practices.

REVERSE BREATHING

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. **Posture:** Stand or sit upright, spine tall. hands on lower abdomen.
 2. **Inhale** slowly through your nose:
 - Draw the abdomen inward (as if pulling toward the spine)
 - Expand the chest without tension
 3. **Exhale** slowly:
 - Release the abdominal contraction
 - Allow the belly to expand naturally
 4. Focus your attention on the lower dantian, an energy center ~2 inches below the navel.
 5. Sync this breath with Tai Chi/Qigong movements or seated meditation.
- ◆ **Tip:** Practice slowly at first. Coordinate with movement only after internal rhythm stabilizes.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. **Posture:** Stand or sit upright, spine tall, hands on lower abdomen.
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Tip: Practice slowly at first. Coordinate with movement only after internal rhythm stabilizes.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Tai Chi or Qigong training	Amplifies internal energy and stability
Martial arts and grounding	Centers power and enhances reaction time
Core activation and organ massage	Builds internal muscle tone and breath control
Focused meditation	Increases inner stillness and body awareness
Longevity and energy cultivation	Promotes Qi nourishment and body alignment

Quotes From the Field

“Reverse breathing is the art of charging the body from the inside out.”

— Daoist Breathing Manual

“When you reverse the breath, you reverse the scattered mind.”

— Qigong Master Hu Xianxu

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	2–3 minutes	Seated, without movement
Intermediate	5–10 minutes	Integrated into Tai Chi or Qigong
Advanced	15+ minutes	Combined with inner smile or microcosmic orbit techniques

Safety & Modifications

⚠ Not recommended for:

- High blood pressure
- Pregnancy
- Those prone to breath-holding stress

✅ Keep breath gentle and steady, especially when beginning

✓ Use mirror feedback or teacher support for abdominal control

Reference Highlights

- Chia, M. (2009). Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao
- Cohen, K. (1999). The Way of Qigong
- Wong, E. (1997). The Art of Breathing in Daoist Alchemy
- Harvard Medical School (2016). Qigong and Mind-Body Medicine

CHAPTER 14: WIM HOF BREATHING

THE COLD POWER WITHIN

This final breathing technique may be one of the most modern and feels like a melding of several of the techniques we have already studied and gone through in this document. The power of it is undeniable. It's practiced by several of the most authentic and successful podcasters and health gurus of our time. With or without cold immersion, this breathing technique add power and remarkable strength, immunity and resilience to our body and mind. I regularly do this at the back of the airplane when on a long-distance flight, sometimes as often as one set of thirty every hour. It helps with the jet lag, the fatigue and the focus. And as I have already shared, this is my absolute non-negotiable start to every day, followed by a TM session (transcendental meditation).

Introduction

Popularized by Dutch endurance athlete Wim Hof, this breathing method is a modern combination of hyperventilation, breath retention, and cold exposure. It is designed to supercharge the body, increase resilience, and tap into deep states of focus and vitality.

“Breathe deeply, and you will unlock your own inner power.”

— Wim Hof

What Is the Wim Hof Method?

The technique includes:


- Cycles of deep rhythmic breathing (hyperoxygenation)
- Voluntary breath-holds
- A final “recovery breath” hold

This practice increases oxygen saturation, alkalizes the body, and stimulates stress adaptation pathways.

The Science at a Glance

 Alkalizes the Blood

Temporary respiratory alkalosis increases pH, creating a “charged” cellular environment and heightened alertness.

 Activates Autonomic Nervous System

One of few techniques shown to voluntarily influence immune and autonomic function, including inflammation modulation.

❄️ Increases Resilience to Stress and Cold

When paired with cold therapy, enhances adrenal control, vascular flexibility, and brown fat activation.

Clinical and Experimental Backing

- PNAS Study (2014): Wim Hof method participants were able to suppress inflammation during endotoxin exposure.
- Radboud University: Found voluntary immune and sympathetic nervous system control via breath holds and cold exposure.
- Neuroimaging: Reveals increased activity in periaqueductal gray, a brain region associated with pain control.

Technique Breakdown

◆ Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sit or lie down in a safe, comfortable space.
2. Inhale deeply through the nose or mouth, expanding fully (belly → chest), then let go passively without forcing.
3. Repeat this 30–40 times, finding a natural, wave-like rhythm.
4. After the last exhale, hold your breath as long as possible (Retention Phase).
5. When you feel the urge, inhale fully and hold for 15 seconds (Recovery Phase).
6. Repeat for 3–4 cycles. End with meditation or optional cold exposure.

Tip: Always practice in a safe seated or lying position. Never in water or while driving.

WIM HOF BREATHING

RELAX COMFORTABLY
 Find a comfortable, safe position, sitting or lying down.

STEP 2. EXHALE PASSIVELY (let go)
 Breath out to around 70%. fully relaxed: do not force.

STEP 3. INHALE FULLY
 Breathe deeply through the nose or mouth.

STEP 4. EXHALE PASSIVELY (let go)
 Breath out to around 70%. fully relaxed; do not force.

STEP 4. RETAIN BREATH
 After last exhale, hold until the natural urge to breathe returns (-1-3 mins) (-1-3 mins).

TIP: Practice 3-4 rounds, 20 minutes maximum. Do breath holds only in a safe environment.

Common Applications

Scenario	Why It Works
Cold showers or ice baths	Builds mental and physical adaptation
Immune system support	Modulates inflammation and white blood cell activation
Daily energy boost	Increases adrenaline and blood oxygen
Overcoming fatigue or burnout	Triggers hormetic stress resilience
Mental toughness training	Develops willpower, focus, and self-regulation

Quotes From the Field

“You are stronger than you think. The breath is the key.”

— Wim Hof

“It feels like waking up from the inside out.”

— Practitioner Reflection

Practice Prescription

Level	Duration	Frequency
Beginner	3 cycles of 30 breaths	Morning or pre-workout
Intermediate	Add cold exposure post-session	3–5x per week
Advanced	Integrated breath/cold/mindset routine	Daily for resilience training

Safety & Modifications

⚠ Do not practice:

- While driving, swimming, or in water
- If pregnant, epileptic, or with a history of cardiovascular or respiratory conditions

✅ Always follow with integration (rest, grounding)

✓ Combine with cold exposure only when trained


Reference Highlights

- Kox, M. et al. (2014). Voluntary activation of the sympathetic nervous system and attenuation of the innate immune response in humans. PNAS.
- Hof, W. (2015). The Wim Hof Method
- Radboud University Medical Center: Wim Hof Immune Study
- “Becoming the Iceman” by Wim Hof & Justin Rosales

SUMMARY

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BREATHWORK FOR YOU

With dozens of breathwork techniques available—ranging from calming to energizing, simple to psychedelic—it’s essential to choose the right tool for the right moment. This chapter offers a bird’s-eye summary of each practice, followed by a simple guide to help you select based on your goals, energy state, and physical condition.

 Summary Table: At-a-Glance Comparison

Technique	Core Effect	Best For	Duration
Diaphragmatic Breathing	Parasympathetic calm	Stress, anxiety, breath retraining	5–10 min
Box Breathing	Focused calm, HRV	Performance under stress	2–5 min
4-7-8 Breathing	Sleep induction, calming	Insomnia, anxiety	1–3 min
Alternate Nostril	Balancing & clarity	Meditation prep, anxiety	5–10 min
Pursed-Lip Breathing	Slows exhale, relieves SOB	COPD, panic, exertion	2–5 min
Lion’s Breath	Releases tension, energizes	Public speaking, anxiety	1–2 min
Resonant Breathing	HRV & mood regulation	Depression, emotional rebalancing	10–20 min
Bhastrika (Bellows)	Energizing, alertness	Morning energy, fog	1–3 min
Holotropic Breathwork	Deep emotional processing	Trauma, transformation	2–3 hrs
Biodynamic Breathwork	Somatic trauma release	Body-mind integration	45–90 min
Buteyko Method	CO ₂ tolerance, breath control	Asthma, anxiety	5–10 min
Ānāpānasati	Mindfulness, insight	Meditation, daily reset	10–30 min
Reverse Breathing	Core toning, inner energy	Qigong, Tai Chi	5–15 min
Wim Hof Method	Resilience, immune boost	Cold, burnout, fatigue	15–30 min

Choosing Based on Your Needs

😓 To Calm Down & Relieve Stress:

- Diaphragmatic Breathing
- 4-7-8 Breathing
- Resonant Breathing
- Ānāpānasati

💪 To Energize or Focus:

- Bhastrika
- Wim Hof
- Lion's Breath
- Reverse Breathing

🧘 To Meditate or Center:

- Alternate Nostril
- Box Breathing
- Ānāpānasati
- Buteyko

🌀 To Process Emotions or Trauma:

- Holotropic Breathwork
- Biodynamic Breathwork
- Resonant Breathing (with support)

🫁 To Improve Physical Breath Function:

- Buteyko
- Pursed-Lip Breathing
- Diaphragmatic Breathing
- Reverse Breathing

❄️ To Boost Resilience & Cold Adaptation:

- Wim Hof Method
- Reverse Breathing (Qigong)

“The breath is the remote control of the brain and body. Choose the right setting.”
— Dr. Andrew Huberman

 Breathwork Safety Guide

Situation	Caution Required
Pregnancy	Avoid Wim Hof, Bhastrika, Holotropic
Heart/BP Issues	Avoid Retention or Bhastrika without clearance
Mental Health Conditions	Use trauma techniques with a guide
Breath Hold Anxiety	Begin with Diaphragmatic or Box Breathing
Asthma or COPD	Start with Buteyko or Pursed-Lip only

Quotes to Guide Your Practice

“Breathing consciously is the bridge between survival and self-mastery.”

— James Nestor, *Breath*

“We cannot always control what happens around us, but we can always return to the breath.”


— Thich Nhat Hanh

“Master the breath, and you master the nervous system.”

— Dr. Richard Brown, Columbia University

CHEAT SHEET: QUICK CONDITION GUIDE:

What breath work to practice for your situation.

 **Breathwork for Specific Conditions (A–Z)**

Please note – these are suggestions. Not the only solution.

Practicing what breathing techniques work best for you, are comfortable and help you the most is the only real solution. You are you, unique and complex in all your own stories. Learn the options, explore, and then find your own road.

Condition / Symptom	Recommended Breathing Technique(s)
ADHD / Attention Deficit	Ānāpānasati, Alternate Nostril, Box Breathing
Anger or Irritability	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Box Breathing, Ānāpānasati
Anxiety (Generalized)	Diaphragmatic Breathing, 4-7-8 Breathing, Buteyko, Resonant Breathing
Asthma	Buteyko Method, Pursed-Lip Breathing, Diaphragmatic
Bipolar (depressive episodes)	Resonant Breathing (under supervision), Ānāpānasati
Burnout / Chronic Fatigue	Wim Hof Method, Resonant Breathing, Bhastrika
Cardiovascular Recovery	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Resonant Breathing, Pursed-Lip
Chronic Pain	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Holotropic Breathwork, Ānāpānasati
COPD / Emphysema	Pursed-Lip Breathing, Buteyko Method, Diaphragmatic
Creative Block / Fog	Bhastrika, Lion’s Breath, Biodynamic Breathwork
Depression	Resonant Breathing, Ānāpānasati, Box Breathing, Biodynamic Breathwork
Digestive Issues (IBS, bloating)	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Ānāpānasati
Emotional Numbness	Biodynamic Breathwork, Holotropic Breathwork
Emotional Overwhelm	Box Breathing, Alternate Nostril, Ānāpānasati
Fatigue (non-clinical)	Wim Hof, Bhastrika, Lion’s Breath
Fear / Panic Attacks	4-7-8 Breathing, Diaphragmatic Breathing, Buteyko
Grief / Loss	Holotropic Breathwork, Ānāpānasati, Resonant
Headaches / Tension	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Alternate Nostril
Heart Rate Regulation	Resonant Breathing, Box Breathing

High Blood Pressure	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Resonant Breathing
Hyperventilation	Buteyko, Box Breathing, Pursed-Lip
Immunity Boost / Inflammation	Wim Hof Method (cautiously), Resonant Breathing
Insomnia / Sleep Problems	4-7-8 Breathing, Resonant Breathing, Diaphragmatic
Low Mood / Apathy	Bhastrika, Lion’s Breath, Wim Hof
Menopause Symptoms (hot flashes, mood)	Resonant Breathing, Ānāpānasati, Buteyko
Mental Clarity	Alternate Nostril, Bhastrika, Wim Hof
Morning Fatigue	Wim Hof Method, Bhastrika, Lion’s Breath
Mouth Breathing / Dry Mouth	Buteyko Method, Diaphragmatic Breathing
Muscle Tension	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Biodynamic Breathwork
Nervous System Dysregulation	Resonant Breathing, Diaphragmatic Breathing, Ānāpānasati
Overthinking / Racing Mind	4-7-8 Breathing, Ānāpānasati, Alternate Nostril
Pain (Somatic or Chronic)	Biodynamic Breathwork, Holotropic Breathwork
Panic Disorder	Buteyko, 4-7-8 Breathing, Box Breathing
Performance Anxiety (public speaking, exams)	Box Breathing, Lion’s Breath, Alternate Nostril
PTSD (mild to moderate)	Resonant Breathing, Biodynamic Breathwork, Ānāpānasati
Respiratory Recovery (post-COVID, bronchitis)	Pursed-Lip Breathing, Buteyko, Diaphragmatic
Sleep Apnea (mild)	Buteyko Method, Diaphragmatic Breathing
Social Anxiety	Box Breathing, Ānāpānasati, Alternate Nostril
Sports Performance	Wim Hof Method, Reverse Breathing, Buteyko
Stress	Diaphragmatic Breathing, Resonant Breathing, 4-7-8
Trauma Healing (somatic)	Biodynamic Breathwork, Holotropic Breathwork
Vocal or Jaw Tension	Lion’s Breath, Diaphragmatic Breathing
Workplace Burnout	Resonant Breathing, Wim Hof, Box Breathing

CHEAT SHEET : BREATHING STYLE BENEFITS

Technique	Description	Benefits	Why Consider It
Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing	Slow, deep belly breaths	Lowers BP/HR, enhances relaxation, improves lung function	Simple, effective, clinically used (e.g. pulmonary rehab)
Box / Square Breathing	Inhale–hold–exhale–hold (equal counts, e.g. 4s)	Calms stress, regulates nervous system	Military-grade emotional control, ideal anywhere
4-7-8 Breathing	Inhale 4s, hold 7s, exhale 8s	Helps sleep, reduces anxiety, lowers HR/BP	Proven by Dr. Weil—great before bed or meetings
Alternate Nostril (Nadi Shodhana)	One nostril at a time breathing	Balances ANS, sharpens focus, lowers HR	Rooted in pranayama—accessible stress reliever
Pursed-Lip Breathing	Inhale nose, exhale through pursed lips	Slows breathing, aids COPD/asthma sufferers	Clinically used during exertion or recovery
Lion’s Breath (Simha Pranayama)	Exhale with tongue out, “haaa” sound	Releases facial tension, energizes, eases jaw tightness	Great for anxiety or office tension
Resonance Coherent Breathing	Balanced inhale & exhale	Improves mood, oxygenation, stress reduction	Deep psychophysiological balance
Bhastrika (Bellows Breath)	Rapid belly breathing	Energizes, oxygenates, mental clarity	Use when needing a quick energy boost
Holotropic Breathwork	Vigorous, continuous breath for 2–3 hrs (with music/facilitator)	Emotional release, deep self-exploration	Powerful tool—use under guidance
Biodynamic Breathwork	Combines breath, movement, sound, emotion	Trauma healing, release deep tension	Used in trauma therapy, body-oriented approach

Buteyko Method	Nose-breathing, breath-holding, slow breaths	Asthma/COPD management—aids airway control	Alternative therapy, though evidence mixed
Ānāpānasati (Mindful Breath Awareness)	Passive awareness of breath	Increases attention, emotional regulation	Core of Buddhist meditation practices
Reverse Breathing (Qigong/Tai Chi)	Thoracic inhale with abdominal contraction	Strengthens diaphragm, fosters chi flow	Enhances martial arts and inner energy

 Disclaimer

This guide is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

- Individuals with serious health conditions should consult a qualified healthcare provider before beginning any breathwork practice.
- Breath retention or intense breathwork (e.g., Wim Hof, Bhastrika, Holotropic) should only be practiced in a safe, supervised environment.
- Results may vary based on individual health, mindset, and consistency of practice.

When in doubt, start gently, stay aware, and listen to your body.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Breathe In! Breathe Out!
Seemed simple didn't it?

I discovered that we teach best what we most need to learn. After I found myself shallow breathing, having to deal with anxiety, coping a little less well every time a situation arose... I knew that several options were available. Some were medication, and one was breathing. I chose to go the breathing route. So the book was written for me, to help me. It seems to be working.

And maybe, hopefully, it helps you too.

This guide is a toolbox, not a rulebook.

Try different techniques, journal your responses, and return to what feels both safe and transformative.

Start where you are.

Breathe in awareness.
Exhale resistance.

And keep going.

All we need is love.

Brett