

HEALTH

FUNDAMENTALS

Your Best Life Down To a Science

Breathwork

Strategies & Protocols

A Primer on Breathwork

Breathing is something that we do automatically without ever having to think about it. How we breathe is a direct response to our mental, emotional, and physical state. When you're stressed, worried, afraid, happy, sad, excited, depressed or any other number of emotional states not only does the heart rate change, but your breathing does as well.

Breathwork is a quick yet effective way to promote calmness and increase focus and concentration. This way you can perform at your best no matter if you're at work, home, or anywhere else.

Keep reading to learn some of the best kept breathwork secrets, including our top three recommended breathing exercises to practice each day.

The Benefits of Breathwork

If you've ever meditated or attended a yoga class, you may know the phrase "control your breath." This means breathing consciously, with intent and awareness. Because breathing is an automatic function, we rarely stop to think about why we're breathing, or how we can use it to benefit our daily lives.

Taping into your breath is all about building focus and self-awareness. It can also be used as a form of transformational therapy to ease stress, anxiety, and worries that weigh you down.

Physical Benefits

Breathing is vital to living. Each breath you take delivers oxygen back into the bloodstream while also removing harmful carbon dioxide. The process is a whole-body movement, as it involves the chest, stomach, back, and the brain.

Deep breathing offers various physical benefits including:

- Slowed heart rate
- Lowered blood pressure
- Activation of the parasympathetic nervous system
- Use of the diaphragm instead of the chest
- Transport of larger amounts of oxygen to the cells and organs

When your body is stressed and operating in "fight or flight" mode, there is a release of hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones speed up breathing and increase your heart rate.

The best way to reverse the response is with deep breathing. Deep breathing relaxes the body and eases it out of a state of hypervigilance.

Mental Benefits

Not only does deep breathing keep the body calm and relaxed, but it also slows and eases emotional turbulence that you face when stressed. Research has found that breathwork is effective in treating various mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, and even post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Breathwork enables you to reach a deeper mental state. In this state you can access subconscious trauma, emotions, and grudges. By releasing them, you're able to put your mind into a calmer, focused state.

Releasing these subconscious thoughts, feelings, and experiences is cathartic. By "letting go," you'll feel a mental lightness and clarity that's been missing.

Spiritual Benefits

For many people, breathwork is very spiritual. By practicing deep breathing, you're able to move beyond the physical and mental realm and connect with your true inner self.

By removing your ego and connecting to your core spirit, you're able to nurture a true connection to yourself and the universe.

Many have experienced attunements and spiritual awakenings by practicing breathwork. When you feel more connected to the inner self, everything else seems to fall into place.

Top 3 Recommended Breathing Exercises

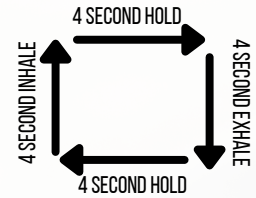
There are countless breathing exercises that you can incorporate into your daily life and routine. However, we highly recommend these basic, but highly effective exercises.

1. Box Breathing

Box breathing, sometimes called square breathing, involves taking slow deep breaths. This type of breathwork heightens concentration and performance. Box breathing has also shown to be a powerful way to relieve stress and anxiety. Before getting started, ensure that you're in an upright position with your feet flat on the floor or legs crossed. Keep your hands relaxed in your lap with your palms facing up. Focus on maintaining your posture throughout the exercise. Find a quiet, stress-free environment that contains no distractions.

To begin:

1. Inhale for four seconds through your nose.
2. Hold your breath for four seconds.
3. Slowly exhale through your mouth for a four second count.
4. Hold your breath for four seconds.
5. Repeat this cycle.



2. Pranayama Alternate Nostril Breathing

Pranayama alternate nostril breathing is a basic technique that can be combined with yoga, meditation, or practiced on its own. This is a great way to calm the mind, relax the body, and increase focus and awareness.

Pranayama alternate nostril breathing is a great technique to use to manage daily stressors. You may also find that this technique helps you to be mindful of the present.

To begin:

1. Sit in a comfortable position with your legs crossed and your left hand on your left knee.
2. Lift your right hand up towards your nose.
3. Exhale completely.
4. Use your right thumb and cover your right nostril.
5. Inhale through your left nostril for a slow four second count.
6. Cover both nostrils (right thumb on your right nostril, right ring finger on your right nostril)
7. Hold for 16 seconds.
8. Lift your thumb off your right nostril.
9. Exhale for eight seconds through your right nostril.
10. Keep your left nostril covered with your right ring finger.
11. Breath in for a 4 second count through your right nostril.
12. Cover both nostrils (right thumb on your right nostril, right ring finger on your right nostril)
13. Repeat the same pattern alternating between nostrils.

This breathing exercise can be repeated for 5 to 10 minutes or as long as you feel you need. Always finish by finishing the exhale through your left nostril.

3. R & R Breathing

R & R (or Rest and Relax Breathing) is a technique used to help you induce a deep state of relaxation. This is a perfect strategy to use right before bed. The simple breathing protocol is done by inhaling through the nose for a count of 7 seconds and then exhaling through the mouth slowly for a count of 11 seconds. This slow deliberate breathing technique helps to relax the mind and body helping to prepare you for sleep.

4. Reset Breathing

Reset breathing, also known as the Wim Hof style technique, is simple yet extremely powerful. This breathing exercise is an effective way to stimulate deep physiological processes, enabling us to realize our full potential.

The Wim Hof method is all about reconnecting to your core self, to others, and to our surroundings.

Practicing this breathing method unlocks all sorts of benefits, including reduced stress levels, better sleep, increased energy levels, and heightened focus and determination.

To begin:

1. Lay down on a comfortable surface. Ensure your back and hips are comfortable and aligned.
2. Take 30 deep inhales through the nose, counting about 3 to 4 seconds per inhale.
3. Exhale through the mouth, counting about 1.5 to 2 seconds.
4. Hold the breath for as long as you can.
5. Take one deep inhale.
6. Hold the breath again while slightly putting pressure on the head.
7. Exhale and then repeat from step 2.

Change Your Life with Breathwork

Breathwork is an important part of inner healing. It's effects can be felt in numerous ways. Don't allow the simplicity of this practice to cause you to not begin implementing it in your life. The moment you begin a serious practice of breathwork you will notice significant changes for the better in your life.