

BREATHWORK

WHAT IS IT

We begin and end our life with the breath. Breathwork supports so many of the challenges everyone experiences. It reduces stress, creates feelings of openness, love, peace, gratitude, clarity, communication, and connection. Breathwork also helps release trauma or mental, physical, and emotional blocks, as well as anxiety, depression, fear, grief, and anger.

Your breath brings oxygen into your body so that you can thrive. When you are physically or emotionally stressed, it affects how you breathe. Breathwork helps to calm your stress and bring balance to your body. So, how does it work, and what are breathwork techniques?

UNDERSTANDING BREATHWORK

Breathwork is trendy right now, but it's not new. People have been practicing breathwork for thousands of years, and it has roots in yoga practice. The basic idea of breathwork is to release toxins and stress when you breathe out and nourish your mind and body when you breathe in.

BENEFITS OF BREATHWORK

Research on breathwork is promising. Potential health benefits of breathwork include:

- Alkalizing your blood PH
- Anti-inflammatory effect
- Elevating your mood

Breathwork may also have a positive impact on your central nervous system. When you feel stressed, your breath tends to become fast and shallow. This limits the oxygen entering your bloodstream. Your brain tells your body that there is a threat, and your body responds in fight or flight.



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BREATHWORK TECHNIQUES

Deep abdominal breathing. This technique uses a long, deep breath. As you breathe, you can visualize your breath filling up your body. Your belly and chest should both expand when you inhale. When you exhale, your chest relaxes, and your navel pulls back in toward your spine. This type of deep breathing tells your body to relax.

4-7-8 breath. This technique adds in counting beats as you breathe in and out as a way to quiet and focus your mind. Breathe in for four beats, hold your breath for seven beats, and then exhale for eight beats. A longer exhale encourages you to completely empty your lungs.

Alternate nostril breathing. Start with your right thumb applying pressure to your right nostril. Breathe in using only your left nostril and hold your breath as you switch sides. Release your right thumb and use your right index finger to apply pressure to the left nostril as you exhale through the right nostril. Pause, take another deep breath in, and then alternate again. This type of breathing technique helps encourage balance in your mind and body.

Breath of fire. This is a more advanced technique. When you inhale, your abdominal muscles are relaxed. When you exhale, engage your core to help push the air out of your body. This breathing technique may take some practice. Once achieved, it helps to provide a sense of steadiness.

Holotropic breathwork. It's best to have an experienced instructor help you practice this technique. The idea is to achieve a continuous inhale and exhale pattern with no pause in between. This type of breathing floods your body with oxygen and renews your cells.

