



HARMONY
COUNSELING

Basic Breathwork Guidance and Techniques

Congratulations in your interest in better understanding your breath and its relationship to your health! The most foundational principal with breathwork is, **“The breath is the king of the brain,”** which means our brain is always scanning and listening to the breath, and doing what it says to do.

Whatever your breath does, your brain follows.

If you want your brain to feel and think differently, change the breath!

What follows are basic pieces of advice and guidance for starting a breathwork practice on your own.

Basic Breathwork Principals

- ✓ You can use breath to change how you feel when you are feeling badly, or you can use it proactively to completely change your brain. You decide! We recommend moving toward developing a daily breathwork practice, ideally in the morning and within the first 30-minutes of waking up, as this is when the brain is most programmable and this practice will most benefit you for the entire day ahead.
- ✓ We recommend starting with 6 minutes per day and increasing to 20 or more minutes per day. You will find that after you get over the initial resistance and mental obstacles, you will start to crave this practice and will miss your practice if you are not able to do it! When you start out, please be kind and gentle with yourself. If you forget to do it one day, do not despair, and do not put yourself down. This is part of the learning curve! This new practice is about adopting attitudes of kindness, neutrality and acceptance. When you miss a morning, this is part of your journey, so practice kindness, neutrality and acceptance for your imperfect nature and you will be well on your way!
- ✓ Find a place in your home that is clear, quiet and clean, a place that can be yours every morning. This can be a chair, a yoga mat, or a cushion on the floor, or it can simply be a place on your sofa, you decide.
- ✓ If you are new to breathwork and meditation, we recommend using an app on your phone, such as Headspace, Calm, or Insight Timer, and not starting out with the following practice. You may progress to the practice whenever you feel it is accessible to you.

Basic Breathwork Sequence

<i>Sequence</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
1. Listen to and deepen the breath	<p>Sit quietly, notice your body, adjust yourself so you feel comfortable sitting.</p> <p>Start to tune into your breath and the sensation of breath. Deepen and lengthen the breath.</p> <p>Start to breathe in the nose and out of the mouth. As you do this, give yourself permission to let go of any worries, any anxiety, any resistance, or negativity within you. Allow the breath to move the emotion out of your body.</p>	1-3 minutes	Tuning In to You and your experience of the present moment.
2. Tune into your intention for your practice and your day.	<p>In your mind, think of one quality you would like to cultivate during this practice. And say this word inside your head many times.</p> <p>For example: ease, acceptance, peace, positivity, or hope.</p>	30 seconds	Learning to direct your thoughts in the direction you want to them move.
3. Breath of Fire	<p>Short staccato breath through an “O-Shaped” mouth, while pumping the navel (see instructions).</p> <p>Hands on the heart (right over left), or hands in Gyan mudra (thumb and index finger touching) with palms facing forward, arms at your side.</p> <p>Start out easy. Give yourself breaks if this feels challenging.</p> <p>Remember, the breath comes automatically in after the short breath out! Do not continue this breath of you are only breathing out!</p>	1-3 minutes	Detoxifying for the Body and Emotions (releases toxins from the blood).
4. Shake your body and move in any way that feels intuitive to you.	<p>Bring movement to your body! Breathe in any way that feels comfortable to you!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand and shake • Cat Cow • Spinal Twist, etc. 	1-3 minutes	Movement is healing! Further allows for detoxification and clearing out the old!
5. Three-part breath	<p>Sit down.</p> <p>Breathe in, Hold, and Breathe out, for equal segments.</p> <p>Start with 5 seconds and gradually increase up to 10 seconds.</p>	3-7 minutes.	Balances the brain. Stimulates the glandular system, creating a cascading of hormones from your pituitary and pineal glands, downward,

	<p>Hands on your lap, palms down, or use Gyan mudra again, hands on lap.</p> <p>Pro Tip: Use the Repeat Timer app on your phone, or use the beat of a beautiful song to count your breath.</p>		<p>which creates a feeling of wellness.</p>
<p>6. Breathe in through your left nostril, close your right with your right thumb.</p>	<p>Breathe in until you cannot breathe in any more. Then take little “sips” of air.</p> <p>Close your left nostril (both nostrils are now closed), and hold for as long as you can.</p> <p>Release the breath through the LEFT nostril only, slowly and with control.</p>	<p>Start with 10 seconds, and move up to 40-50 seconds.</p>	<p>Holding the breath creates emotional resilience, which is our superpower!</p>
<p>7. Sit quietly and observe your body and feel gratitude in your heart.</p>	<p>Simply breathe in any way that feels right for you.</p> <p>Observe your Body, how do you feel differently from the beginning of this practice (no judgement, just notice!)</p> <p>Remember the intention you set at the beginning of the practice.</p> <p>Feel the sensation of gratitude in your heart. You may see white or pink light or sparkly light in your heart. You might notice a happy, elated emotion. Do your best to work on creating this feeling.</p> <p>Start small if it is challenging, simply see the flame of candle in your heart.</p>	<p>1-3 minutes</p>	<p>Tuning into your experience of the present moment.</p> <p>Learning to direct your thoughts in the direction you want to them move.</p> <p>Practicing Gratitude. When your intention is paired with the feeling of gratitude, the power of that thought-field is amplified!</p>

Basic Breathwork Techniques

<i>Technique</i>	Instructions	Symptoms Addressed
Diaphragmatic Breathing	<p>Start by noticing your breath.</p> <p>Then move the breath into the diaphragm, a muscle located below the rib cage and above the belly button.</p>	<p>Emotional balance and resilience.</p> <p>Improved attention and concentration.</p>

	<p>Notice your belly moving out, and start to notice your back and side body also expanding with the breath (all sides of the abdomen).</p> <p>Notice the rise and fall of the belly for several minutes.</p>	<p>Reduced stress response.</p>
Reset Breath	<p>Take a Deep Breath in the Nose, place your hands on your heart, and squeeze the pelvic floor (sex organs, rectum and perinium).</p> <p>Hold for 5-10 seconds, release air through the mouth.</p> <p>Repeat 3x.</p>	<p>Quick reset for fear, anxiety and panic.</p> <p>Sends message to the brain that you are safe.</p>
Breath of Fire	<p>Exhale quickly through the mouth (O-shaped) or the nose. Push the air out forcefully through the abdomen (space just below the ribs). This will feel like belly pumps and will use your abdominal muscles. Do not try to inhale, the inhalation will come naturally.</p> <p>If you are unable to breathe enough air back in, please do not continue. The air should come in easily without thinking or effort as the result of a vacuum that is created by quickly exhaling.</p>	<p>Detoxifies the blood</p> <p>Removes negative emotion from the body.</p>
Three-part or Triangle Breath	<p>Breathe in, Hold, and Breathe out, for equal segments.</p> <p>Start with 5 seconds and gradually increase up to 10 seconds.</p> <p>Hands on your lap, palms down, or use Gyan mudra again, hands on lap.</p> <p>Pro Tip: Use the Repeat Timer app on your phone, or use the beat of a beautiful song to count your breath.</p>	<p>Balances the brain.</p> <p>Stimulates the glandular system, creating a cascading of hormones from your pituitary and pineal glands, downward, which creates a feeling of wellness.</p>
Alternate Nose Breath	<p>Place your right thumb on your right nostril, breathe in the left nostril, close both nostrils, then hold for a few seconds. Release the right nostril, inhale through the right nostril, and hold for a few seconds. Release air through the left nostril, and then repeat.</p> <p>You can use Three-part breath or just breathe according to your own pattern, but try to make the inhale and exhales roughly equal.</p>	<p>Balances the two hemispheres of the brain, promoting a feeling of emotional balance.</p>

Basic Breathwork Techniques were partially adapted from “Breathwork for Brain Change: Five Simple Breathing Techniques for Trauma, and How they Heal the Brain.” E-book, retrieved March 2021, at www.jennifersweeton.com , published in 2018.

This document was written by Jill Wolski, LCSW.

This information is given as an educational resource and is not meant to be medical advice. Any decision to start a breathwork practice should be made in consultation with your physician.