



Introduction to Breathwork

This informal CPD article, 'Introduction to Breathwork', was provided by [InnerCamp](#), who work within the holistic health sector offering expert-led solutions to help you rediscover your inner force and stand strong in your foundation on both personal and professional levels.

What is Breathwork?

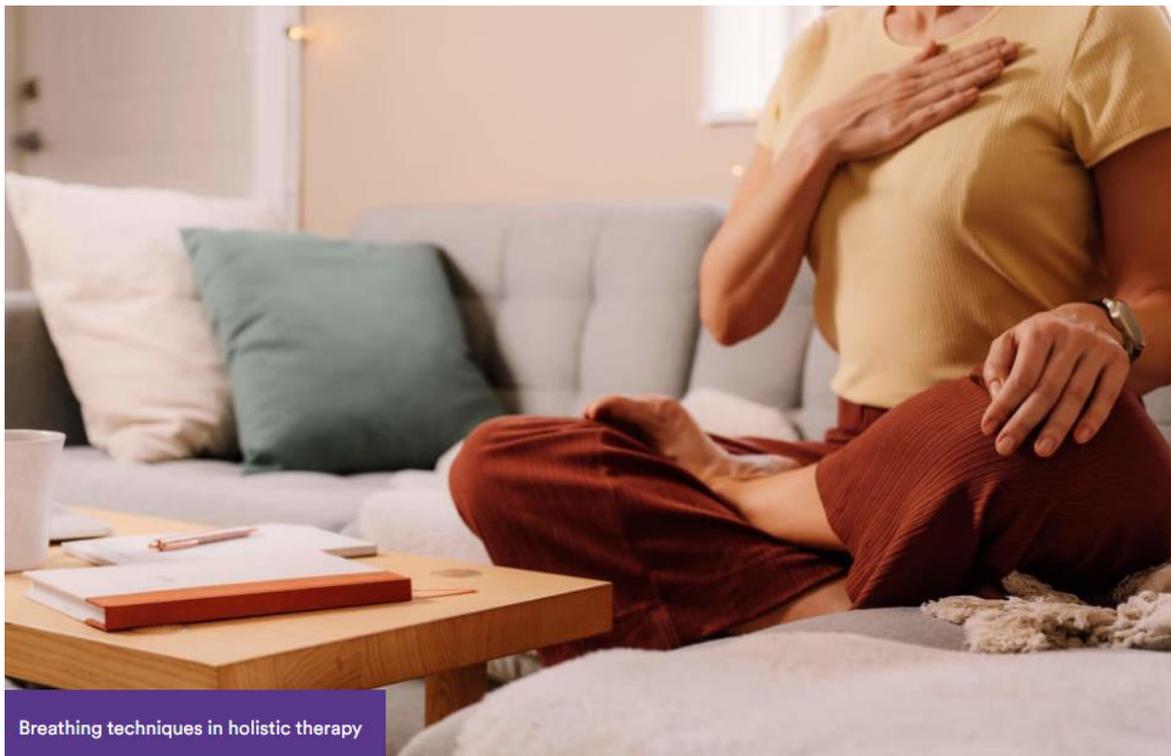
Breathing is our primary source of energy. It's the only vital bodily function done unconsciously, but it can also be practiced and regulated consciously. We take 16-17 breaths per minute, but we only use about 1 liter of our 6-7liter lung capacity. Mostly it's because we breathe too shallow into our chest and not into our bellies. Short, shallow breathing into the chest activates our sympathetic nervous system, which throws our bodies into "fight or flight" mode, causing feelings of confusion, anxiety, and stress. On the other hand, deep belly breathing activates our parasympathetic nervous system," which throws us into a "rest and digest" state of living, and we feel calm, at peace, and regulated.

Next time you feel stressed, overwhelmed, and anxious, override your nervous system by focusing on your breath and taking a few full and deep breaths into the belly. You can use this short breathing exercise anytime throughout the day to get back into your body. Although such a minor daily correction in your usual breathing patterns can help you a lot, conscious connected breathwork has even more potent, long-lasting transforming effects on your whole being.

Conscious Connected Breathwork

Conscious connected breathwork is a holistic therapeutic tool that helps to heal and fully integrate the physical, mental and emotional state. Several breathing techniques have been used for thousands of years in Yoga (Pranayama), Taoist, Buddhist, and Shamanic traditions and have mostly come to the Western cultures during the previous century. Nowadays, popular conscious connected breathwork techniques, such as Holotropic and Rebirthing Breathwork, were developed in the 1960s and 1970s, during the self-awareness era. Besides these, many other forms of breathwork have been developed, such as Clarity Breathwork, Transformational Breathwork, The Wim Hof Method, and Shamanic Breathwork.

By consciously breathing through the mouth, without pauses after the inhale or after the exhale, we dive deep into our subconscious mind, from where we can release suppressed memories and emotions, awaken our senses, see the vision of our true self, and sharpen our intuition. We can access the same transformational benefits as with herbal medicine with no external intake but conscious connected breathing. That's why some claim that breathwork is the most powerful self-healing tool anyone can use.



Breathing techniques in holistic therapy

The Process of The Breathwork Session

Usually, a breathwork session takes about an hour, allowing our bodies to relax, go deep into the process, and fully integrate. In order to fully experience the benefits of breathwork, it's crucial that you surrender your ego during your session. Practically speaking, that means letting go of any expectations or judgments about what the experience should look like or how others might react if they saw us in this vulnerable state (e.g., crying).

One of the many benefits of conscious connected breathwork is that we do not surrender and let go only during the session but also in other areas of our life. Growth and expansion follow when we listen to our bodies instead of listening to the limiting beliefs in our heads. One study reports that people who practice breathwork feel more faithful, flexible, creative, and patient. Increased self-awareness even helps people involved in psychotherapy, healing quicker and more profoundly.

Another way we can use breathwork is before meditation. Many people struggle to meditate because they can't get rid of intrusive thoughts that make them anxious and nervous. Practicing breathwork for only 10-22 minutes slows down the brain's default mode network, which means we let go of the ego or sense of self. Practicing breathwork regularly creates new neuropathways, the key to our inner intelligence. The changed states of consciousness cause us to break free from our usual obsessive thought patterns and enter the meditation with a peaceful state of mind.

What are the benefits of practicing Breathwork?

Breathwork is an integrative healing modality affecting us on many levels. From a physical aspect, it helps a breather to improve the sleep cycle, strengthen the immune system, regulate the nervous system and access body memories, either from the pre-birth, birth, or post-birth stage.

On an emotional and psychological level, deep breathing helps us to heal the wounds of unresolved traumas and to release any stuck emotions stored deeply in our cells. Depression is one of the most rapidly increasing diseases in the world and is caused due to emotional suppression that leads to an emotional shutdown. Breathwork unlocks the energy flow in our bodies; therefore, we can feel an enriched experience of being alive again. Moreover, this experience enables us to have more loving and intimate relationships and opens our hearts to expand our experience of love.

Tapping into our unconscious makes us feel the divine energy pulsing through our bodies and reaching a higher state of consciousness. That's how we find the strength from within, feel freedom and start living our truths. It doesn't change only our body and mind, but also the soul.



Short Breathwork Exercise

A short breathing exercise you can start with on your breathwork journey is "20 connected breaths", which can be done anytime. Sit on a chair with feet fully touching the ground or lie down on the ground, preferably not on your bed. You breathe in and out only through the nose during the whole practice.

Firstly, take four short breaths and then one longer, more extended breath. Repeat this cycle four times (4+1+4+1+4+1+4+1=20). The breath must be connected, with no pauses in between. Breathing is an analogy to life - inhale is the mirror of our life urge, and exhale is the mirror of surrender to life. That's why you need to inhale enthusiastically and exhale relaxed, showing life how much you trust it.

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