



At a seminar, coordinator Denis Ouellette shows a participant how to do a **breathing assessment** to determine if they are a chest or belly breather.

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# Just breathe

*Workshop focuses on better, more healthful breathing*

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Denis Ouellette, a certified Optimal Breathing® development specialist from Montana, says most people breathe at only 20% of their full capacity, which takes a big toll on their health.

Ouellette works to help people correct their breathing patterns for better overall wellness. He is planning a seminar at the Minot YMCA this Saturday from noon to 6 p.m.

“Most people are high-chest breathers, instead of diaphragmatic breathers. When your breathing is off, or too shallow, it compromises every aspect of your health and can

lead to more serious disease,” Ouellette said.

“Once you know what good breathing looks and feels like, you can easily retrain your internal breathing pattern by breathing the right way about 1,000 times. That may seem like a lot, but it’s only 100 times a day for 10 days. Considering that people unconsciously breathe 15,000 to 18,000 times a day, it’s not too hard to do,” he added.

Ouellette began breathwork in the late 1970s and trained with breathwork pioneers in California. He is currently a holistic-health practitioner, doing breathwork and bodywork, in the Bozeman, MT area. He conducts his Integral Breathwork™ Seminars internation-

ally. He also publishes a regional health magazine called *Natural Life News* (see [NaturalLifeNews.com](http://NaturalLifeNews.com)).

## **Breathing Work vs. Breathwork**

“Breathing practice has developed and evolved over time,” Ouellette explained. What he now calls Integral Breathwork is a combination of two different sciences, *breathing work* and *breathwork*. He starts off with breathing work, assessment and improvement exercises to optimize the breathing pattern, and then leads the group in a lying-down, transformational breathwork session.

“In the early experimental days, some people would practice breathwork and not enjoy it as much because it was unpredictable,” Ouellette said. “Some people got



Denis Ouellette, in blue, leads group in practicing one of several **breathing exercises** done at the seminar.

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muscle cramping in their hands, or they would experience psychological or energy states that were uncomfortable for them. These happened because people were doing a lot of *breathwork* without first doing the corrective aspects of the *breathing work*. The way we're doing it now is safe, more gentle, predictable, and always beneficial."

He explained that this work is becoming more accepted by the medical and psychotherapeutic communities, especially by practitioners who have integrated the sciences of the east in combination with traditional western medicine.

"Eastern health practices, like Tai Chi, Qigong and Yoga, have always incorporated breathing techniques for overall health and prevention. For centuries, they have understood the importance of good breathing. With western medicine, we have often overlooked the implications of better breathing and tended to ignore it because it is automatic," Ouellette said. "But the breath can be consciously controlled as well. This creates a doorway into the maintenance and repair of all our internal systems," he added.

While Ouellette's seminar is open to the public, he is offering additional training this weekend (with approved continuing education hours) for health-care providers and massage therapists interested in incorporating breathing work into their practice.

"Breathing is the best thing I know of to combine with bodywork and massage for the release of tension. In fact, better breathing is the most important thing you can do to enhance any self-healing or therapy work you're doing," Ouellette said.

### What to Expect

Participants in the seminar will receive personal breathing assessments, take-home skills and tools, do several breath-expansion exercises, understand breathing physiology and psychology, and take part in an extended breathwork session.

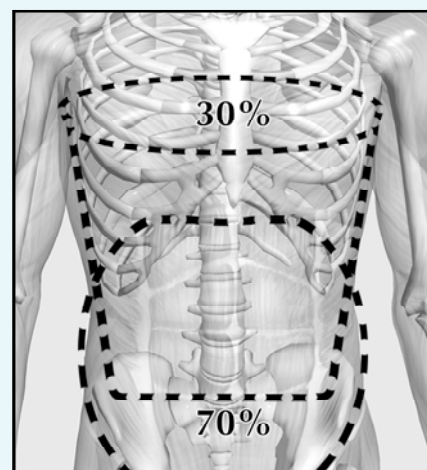
"The seminar isn't just for people with breathing difficulties. However, those with asthma, sleep apnea, and other problems will find answers too. It's for anyone who wants to increase their health, vitality, and longevity. People will notice the benefits immediately," Ouellette said.

"Oxygen is the body's main food and its main source of energy. The exhalation is the main mechanism through which the body detoxifies itself. Breathwork clears, flushes and energizes all the systems of the body. Participants often feel transformed after the seminar," he added.

"All these marvelous changes start to happen when you fully oxygenate and detoxify your body. You can feel a lot of new energy, even euphoria, relief from pain and tension, and a lot of shifts happening in the body," he said.

Saturday's seminar costs \$75,

or two for \$130. In addition to the six-hour seminar, open to the public, and the hands-on training for practitioners, Ouellette is offering private sessions on Sunday. For more information and to pre-register, contact Marcia Preskey locally at 720-5220, or by e-mail at breathe7205220@yahoo.com. More info on Ouellette's work can be found at [IntegralBreathwork.com](http://IntegralBreathwork.com). ■



**An optimal deep breath** starts with the lungs filling and the diaphragm descending. The lower torso expands in all directions (70%), then the ribs and chest expand (30%). The inhalation is fuller and slower, engaging the entire torso in an upward wave-like motion. The exhalation is simply about relaxing and deflating, followed by a brief pause before the next breath begins. Submitted Graphic