

HEAL YOURSELF

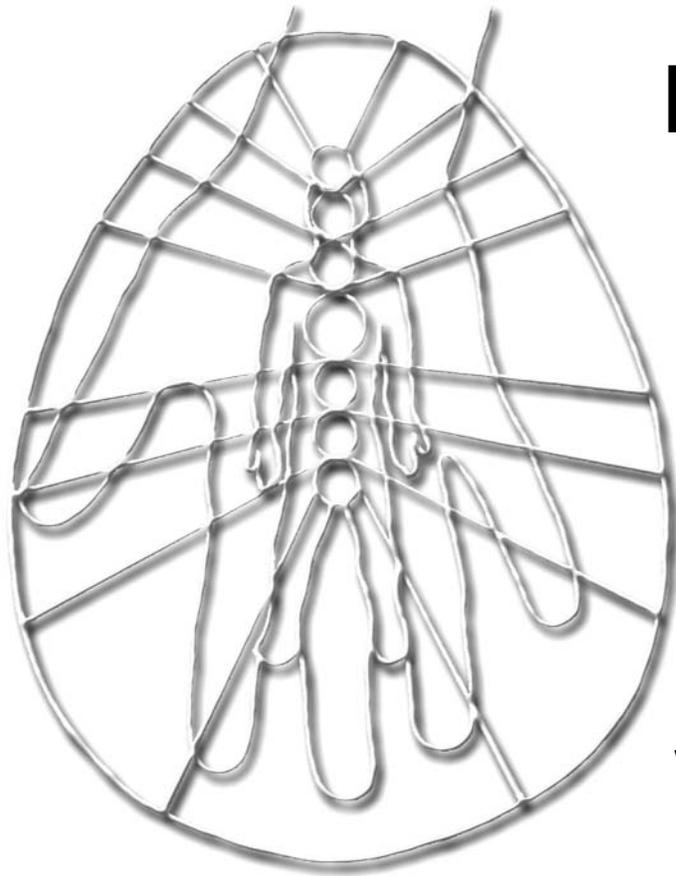
with
Breath,
Light,
Sound &
Water



- Ancient Healing Secrets
- Integral Breathwork™ How-To Manual
- Sound & Light Therapies
- Earth & Water Energies
- Life Extension & Enhancement

Denis Ouellette

with Michael Grant White • Sol Luckman • John C. Ledbetter
Debra Klein • Kevin Ryerson • Michael Richard



HEAL YOURSELF with Breath, Light, Sound & Water

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NATURAL LIFE

NEWS™

HEAL YOURSELF with Breath, Light, Sound and Water

Denis Ouellette

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Your Best Friend

*Early in this book Denis points out,
“Your breath can be your best friend.” Indeed I can agree,
because the breath has become my closest friend and ally in life.
It is truly my constant and loving companion as I travel the world
on this journey of awakening, healing, and growth.*

*Whether I want to calm down or to energize myself, the breath is there to lend
a helping hand. If I want to focus my energies or expand my consciousness,
the breath is waiting to support me in this too. And this is true for everyone.*

*Whether we want to remain closed or stuck or stagnant—
or choose to open ourselves to new feelings, new dimensions,
new realities, a new life—the breath is more than willing
to help us, and it’s already acting upon our subtle cues.*

*No matter what our present situation or calling in life,
no matter what our goals or dreams may be—breathing is a force,
a tool we can use, a bridge of immense practical and spiritual benefit.
And it’s just waiting for us to discover, to explore,
and to develop its power and potential.*

I invite you to use this priceless gift called breath.

Dan Brulé
BreathMastery.com

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& to all those who
contributed sidebars
and stories



Gratitude to My Editors

Olivia Hoyt
Joan Nemeth

Inhale!

You can tap into the healing powers already within your body and make use of nature's purest and simplest elements to do so. You can use breath, light, sound, and water to return to your innate wholeness, beyond what you even thought possible. The subtle life forces flowing through these elements are called *pranas* in the ancient Sanskrit. We absorb and use these *pranas* constantly. Of earth's life-giving elements, air is the most precious. Oxygen is abundant in the air, in water, and in chlorophyll-bearing vegetation. Subtler still are the *pranas* contained in light, both sunlight and artificial, and in the vibrations of pure sound and high-quality music. The material that follows explains how to access the powerful yet little-appreciated healing properties within these elements.

This book also contains information on ancient healing practices that came into my possession over 25 years ago. At that time I published this material and incorporated it into my holistic-health and breathwork practice. Over the years, I have combined this ancient knowledge with present-day science in a system I call Integral Breathwork™. The information is compiled here for your use. We invite you to experience its healing power at one of our Integral Breathwork seminars. We start with the breath as a healing tool, because breath is basic and immediate. It works especially well for people new to alternative therapies. This book is a manual on the practice of breathwork, incorporating its use with light, sound, and water. We use the breath first to clear away toxins and reawaken the senses. Once this foundation is laid and some skill is achieved, we can better perceive and work with the more subtle of the elements and energy forces.

Your breath can be your best friend! It is ever present, providing you with life-giving oxygen and subtle energy from birth until death. It supports you by working heavily in times of exertion and stress and by calming you with slower, gentler patterns when it's time to rest and repair. Can a mother giving birth have any better ally than her breath? The breath is automatic—it works unconsciously, like your beating heart and immune system, your digestion and elimination. It is a pivotal function of the autonomic nervous system. When we bring the breath under our conscious control for healing, it opens up a whole new world. By using the breath in specific and powerful ways, it becomes a doorway into the hallowed inner workings of our physical body, our cellular memories, and our subconscious mind. Through cellular oxygenation (inhale) and the release of toxins along with carbon dioxide (exhale), and by skillfully directing the healing *pranas* of life, we can maintain and repair not only the respiratory system but *all* of our internal systems. When some of this homework is done, we can begin to use the breath as a vehicle for deepening consciousness and apprehending our higher purpose in life.



“The breath is at the hub of the wheel of life.”

Use the breath as your pivotal tool for branching out in all directions for healing and rejuvenation. When invited in with a little vigor, both oxygen and energy will penetrate the physical, mental, and emotional parts of yourself. The body will respond by relieving stress, expelling toxins, and opening energy blockages. When these pathways become clear, the breath can lead you into an awareness of its connection to All of Life.

Since the beginning of recorded history, the breath and other natural elements have been used for healing. Breathwork will enhance and multiply the benefits of any healing modality you are practicing. Those receiving bodywork who breathe fully during their session can double the benefits of their therapy. Yoga and Pilates, hydrotherapy, nutritional and herbal cleanses, and spiritual practices all blend wonderfully with the clearing power of the breath. Bodyworkers and therapists who breathe fully will be more effective and remain energized and well-balanced.

We start with a scientific understanding and experience of what optimal breathing is. Then we partake in a breathwork session to reap the benefits of full-body oxygenation and detoxification. This session has predictable and cyclical phases and will gently clear away one layer of debris at a time. You can set specific goals for your healing, yet you remain open, trusting in the body's innate healing mechanisms to take you reliably on the safest path toward wholeness.

We all store tension in our muscles. But why? Science is advancing in its understanding of the link between body and mind. We're learning that the muscular tissues and the cells themselves have a subconscious memory. Often long after a physical injury or emotional trauma has passed, its shadow can linger on as tension, chronic pain, disability, and self-protectiveness. Emotional reactions, behavioral patterns, and negative mental attitudes can become imprinted and seem difficult to clear away. The breath is a remarkably effective way of getting in there to unlock and release these imprints.

Many of us have a breath that is shallow or nearly shut down. Many of us don't breathe diaphragmatically. This can be both a cause and effect of illness, injury, or the disabling of other internal, automatic systems. **We will always breathe enough to survive, but can our breath—and our life—be fuller?** Can our internal engines work more optimally? Take a moment to notice how you are breathing right now. If you are not breathing as freely as you would like, it could be of great value for you to pursue breathwork.

A big, beautiful breath should be like an ocean wave. On the inhale, as the lungs fill and the diaphragm descends, you should feel a 360° expansion in your lower torso. [See *The Pear, the Cone & the Wave* in Appendix.] This momentum builds and rises with a steady determination to its peak as air fills the rib cage and chest areas. The spine ripples as the wave moves up your body. The muscles of the neck and shoulders should remain relaxed, rather than bulging to lift the ribs off the lungs, as high-chest breathers often do. Then, without holding at the top, we exhale. The momentum spills over and crashes to the shore as we relax and release totally. This kind of exhale even sounds like a crashing ocean wave. We may find ourselves resting before the natural reflex prompts us to take in another breath.

Breathwork is fun and provides instant gratification. Take a few minutes right now

to try the following rhythmic breathing technique. Sit or lie down comfortably somewhere. It's even better if you can be in the fresh air. Close your eyes. Relax and start focusing on your breath. As you breathe in through your nose, first fill your lower lungs. As your diaphragm descends, feel the expansion in your abdomen and sides and even in your lower back and kidney areas. Then feel your ribs open sideways (not upwards) as you fill your middle and upper lungs. Finally, feel your chest rising a bit.

Now fill your head with air. (Humor me on this one.) Traveling along with the physical breath is a corresponding energy flow, understood well by yogis, that you can experiment with. As you breathe in, the energy rises up your spinal column and along your *meridians* (energy pathways). The flow doesn't stop at the top of your lungs. When you get near the top of your inhale, breathe in a little more as you swing the energy around the back and over the top of your head. Feel the cycle coming to rest in the vicinity of your mouth and nose. Next, simply exhale, totally relaxing as you do.

Another helpful visualization is to imagine that oxygen and energy are going directly from your nasal cavities into your brain as you breathe in, refreshing and cleansing you mentally. Repeat the above process

for twenty breaths or so. Now how do you feel? Probably refreshed, grounded, more calm, and centered in the present moment. Maybe you're thinking about how your breath really is your best friend.

Yes, you can benefit greatly by improving the quality and quantity of your breathing, and this book will show you how. Yes, breathing is automatic and unconscious, but through conscious breathing you can access your body's internal systems.

Would you drive your car without opening the hood for regular maintenance or repair?

Let's take a closer look at your body's main fuel, oxygen. It is more necessary than food for keeping cells healthy and happy. Oxygen is like gold! It's your primary source of energy. Oxygen is free, but like gold, it can be elusive because most people breathe at about 20% of their full capacity. As a consequence, their cells suffer. The good digestion resulting from diaphragmatic movement and the good detoxing from an efficient exhale usually don't happen well. This leaves them fatigued and sick.

The brain and nervous system thrive on oxygen. Oxygen displaces harmful free radicals, neutralizes environmental toxins, and helps destroy infectious bacteria, parasites, microbes, and viruses. These invaders, along with cancer cells, are anaerobic, which means they cannot live in oxygen-rich environments.

Oxygen shortage has been linked to every major illness, including heart conditions, poor digestion and elimination, asthma and sinus problems, arthritis, yeast infections, sexual dysfunction, and auto-immune diseases. Some indicators of low-oxygen levels are fatigue,



muscle aches, forgetfulness, heart palpitations, cold extremities from poor circulation, and excessive allergies or colds.

In 1931, Otto Warberg won the Nobel Prize for discovering that only oxygen-starved cells weaken, mutate, and become cancerous. Cells starved for oxygen become something else entirely. Warberg found that rather than living and breathing aerobically, oxygen-starved cells live from the fermentation of sugars, and all their normal functions die off *except for reproduction*.

The benefits of breathwork include increased longevity and vitality, cell regeneration, emotional and mental well-being, and trauma resolution. Our Integral Breathwork seminar is a combination of physiological breathing work and transformational breathwork. The word *integral* means “lacking nothing essential.” We start by doing assessments and several exercises for improving breathing mechanics. Then we lie down for a gentle one-hour breathing session to experience full-body oxygenation and detoxing. Several of the seminar processes are outlined in the Appendix to this book.

Many of us are too often stuck in “fight or flight.” Because of stress, poor diet, and oxygen depletion, the autonomic nervous system stays in emergency mode on the sympathetic side. After one breathwork session, most people will feel what it’s like to have a nervous system that’s finally at peace, free to focus on “rest, digest and heal” on the parasympathetic side. Your body knows just what to do with extra oxygen and how to cleanse itself when given the chance. It will respond by releasing stored toxins and tension and clearing out cellular memories. Every session will be uniquely suited to your body’s most pressing needs.

For a glimpse at the power and potential of this work, let’s start with a few stories from people who have used breathwork to great advantage in their own healing. Then we’ll explore the autonomic nervous system in more detail to understand the fight-or-flight syndrome in ways that Western medicine is now only beginning to understand and embrace. Mike White of Breathing.com checks in next with a more detailed look at oxygen. Then we’ll have some fun exploring the exhale.

Part Two presents the remarkable materials I discovered 25 years ago on the ancient origins of this healing modality. While this book focuses primarily on breathwork, it also explores the healing energies inherent within light, sound, water, and earth. To discover how sound and light activate healing in the DNA, read Sol Luckman’s article in Part Three. Next, John Ledbetter describes the power of the earth’s and our body’s own electric fields. Thanks to both Sol and John for their contributions, and thanks to all who have contributed sidebars for their added perspectives.

In Part Three, you’ll find further tools, guidelines and more stories on the healing practice we call Integral Breathwork, which integrates physiological breathing work with transformational breathwork.

Life is a miracle. Yet some of life’s most precious secrets are hidden in nature’s simplest and purest of elements. It’s time for you to discover them!



Releasing Vietnam

Dustin Fox, AMT



I am an Acoustical Massage Therapist. My first exposure to breathwork was during a massage I was giving to Denis Ouellette. He was breathing differently than anyone I had ever massaged before. His inhales were deep, and his exhales were really full and completely emptied his lungs. I had never studied breathing techniques but was fascinated by this self-cleansing approach to breathing. I signed up to attend his next breathwork seminar. I noticed that several essential health issues were being addressed. As a therapist, I was fascinated by the facts presented as to how we *actually* breathe compared to how we *could* breathe to facilitate better health and well-being.

During the next few months, I attended four breathwork seminars and felt better after each one. But there were deeper issues that I needed to address that had settled into my very soul. It was at my fifth seminar that I felt this would be the day to identify and release whatever it was that was holding me in such turmoil. Following the instructions and breath measurement exercises, we partnered with someone we were naturally drawn to. In an atmosphere of safety and honesty, we shared with each other the issues that we wished to address during our breathwork session. I realized it was time to go after my remaining post-traumatic stress syndrome from the Vietnam War, over 35 five years ago. The cellular memories from that time were still holding me in a depressed state and draining me of my health and spiritual contentment. I needed to release them.

As we began to breathe, I felt stiffness set in throughout my body. The cramping in my hands began to get fairly intense. Denis came over and assisted me through the process. As I allowed myself to relax and breathe through the memories of pain and trauma, they left me. It took one more session for this to be complete. At one point during that sixth one, Denis said he was concerned about me because I looked as gray as a ghost. I think death itself was leaving me! I now feel completely content and cleansed of that trauma and depression. I have now attended twelve seminars, and I am very proud to be a breathwork facilitator.

P.S. **Blood Test.** Last year, before I began breathwork, I was advised by my physician to get a blood test as part of my annual check up. I was surprised to see that my blood cells were not round. The test also revealed that they were clustered together and misshapen. I was advised that this causes a reduction in the ability of the circulatory system to do its job of delivering oxygen and nutrients to the body while removing waste products. This condition had an effect on my liver, kidneys, brain, and heart function. Healthy blood cells are supposed to float free within the system and are almost perfectly round. The doctor advised me to modify my diet to reduce sugar and fats, to exercise, and most importantly, to improve my breathing patterns to facilitate the reduction of stress and increase my level of oxygen intake.

About ten months later, after five breathwork seminars and plenty of breathwork on my own, I returned for another blood test and was gratified to see that the clumping was all but gone. The blood was rich with oxygen. Other tests showed that my organ function was within a normal range. I did make small changes in my diet and do some light exercises, but doing the breathwork regularly is what brought my cells back to life.



Popcorn on a Stove

Brenda Frye

I've been told over the years that I was a shallow breather, but I was never instructed in how to change my breathing. My history of work in the medical community gave me the knowledge of how important oxygen is, but I figured I was breathing—so what was the problem? I was invited by a friend to attend a breathwork seminar and I went out of curiosity. I have attended several of them now and each one has brought me to a different and higher level of awareness and healing.

One of these sessions stands out for me. We were asked to scan our bodies and to select areas that we wanted to focus the healing breath on. I had suffered a severe injury to my right ankle over a year previously and was still experiencing discomfort. As I lay down to begin the breathing, I concentrated on the rhythm and depth of my breath. As time passed, my body began to tingle and then vibrate all the way down to my toes. Also during this time, my ankle began to stiffen and it became quite painful. At first I thought, "What is this? It hurts!" But then I remembered the instruction that, as our cells release the memory of a trauma, we may reexperience the original pain, so I kept my focus on my breathing. Slowly the pain subsided but my ankle still felt stiff. I began to move it in a slow rotation. I felt it cracking repeatedly. It sounded like popcorn on a stove! I soon realized that my ankle was now moving with ease and without any pain at all. As I lay there contemplating with joy what had just happened, I realized that I had released my ankle's injury from my cells and had breathed new life into it.

It is now months later and the ankle is still pain-free. I continue to attend these seminars and do breathwork on my own. I'm always learning more about the benefits of proper rhythmic and full breathing. The Breath of Life is there for my joy and health! I am now happy to be learning how to share this gift with others.

Better Than Ten Therapy Sessions!

M.W.

I first decided to attend a breathwork seminar because of problems I had with chronic fatigue syndrome, since I thought that increased oxygen to the body would help relieve my symptoms. I was in for a surprise when I found that during the session, I was able to experience and release childhood wounds, and specifically, issues of abandonment. I had not come prepared with a box of tissues nor had I expected that my eye makeup would be all gone before the session was over. At the end I thought, "Wow! This was better than ten therapy sessions!" During the next couple of sessions, in addition to increased oxygenation of the cells and body, which provided more clarity and greater well-being, I was able to release more past traumas.

During my latest session, I was in for another surprise. At first I started to fall asleep, but a facilitator came by to wake me up and told me that my drowsiness was due to toxins being released into my bloodstream. As I continued to breathe, the music that was playing reminded me of my search for my perfect love. I recalled the memories and emotions of loves found

and lost in my life. I mourned these experiences and felt the emotion of separation from my perfect love. After feeling this, I came in touch with feelings of the pain of separation from God, my first love. After experiencing this loss, I moved into an unexpected, beautiful experience of my oneness with God. The closest I can come to describing this is as a feeling of total joy, love, and peace. I have been on the spiritual path for many years and have had other spiritual experiences, but this transcendental bliss was very nurturing to my soul.

I came to my first breathwork class with the naive intention of just healing my physical body, and I realized I was healing my emotional body. Now, after this last session, I know this work actually heals all our bodies—the physical, emotional, mental, and memory bodies. Thus breathwork is a vehicle for personal transformation. It was very meaningful for me to discover the benefits of this work for myself. I have found breathwork to be one of those hidden gems—much more than meets the eye!

Asthma & Arterial Fibrillation

Marlenea La Shomb-Moore

I have been dealing with asthma since I was a child and I have carefully avoided foods and situations that I know will trigger an attack. After my first breathwork seminar, I learned how to move out of the sympathetic side of my autonomic nervous system (“fight or flight”) by controlling and directing my breath. Three days later, I was at a girlfriend’s birthday party. There was dairy, a lot of cat hair, and smoking—three big asthma triggers for me. As I left, I felt a strong asthma attack coming on. During my drive home, I did the diaphragmatic breathing and slowed down on my exhale. I was able to quiet my body and avert the asthma attack within one-half hour, where it would usually take me 4 to 5 hours of struggle, plus using an inhaler or drugs.

At the seminar, I also learned the method for calming an asthma attack by lying down and lifting one leg in the air, then slowly lowering my leg to the ground while exhaling and saying “Sssshhhh.”

My husband, David, attended the breathwork with me. He has a problem with arterial fibrillation, where the valve between the upper and lower chambers of the heart will get stuck open, causing blood to drip back down, so the heart is unable to pump the blood properly. This causes light-headedness, nausea, and a racing heart. He becomes extremely weak and needs to get down on the ground with his head between his knees. The next day at a job site, he felt his heart racing again. He dropped his tool belt and got down on his knees. He used a technique he had learned at the seminar to calm his system and direct a slow exhale and energy to his heart area. As with asthma, the non-closing of this valve seems to get triggered by stress. He is now able to bring this condition into balance and get the valve to close every time just by controlling his breath.

He once went to the emergency room when this happened, and they told him there was nothing they could do for him except use the electro-defibrillator to shock the valve into closing. We are glad we have a natural method, along with foot-zone balance and essential oils, to handle this problem.

Are You Stuck in “Fight or Flight”?

Do you tend to see the glass as half empty? Do you find yourself dwelling on worries, fears, or resentments more than you'd like to? Do you overreact to stress or upset? When something bad happens, do you say, “I knew it!” rather than “Well, OK, now what?” These are common emotional indicators of being stuck in fight or flight. This condition shows up in our bodies as an imbalance in the autonomic nervous system called overactive sympathetic tone. The good news is that it's fixable.

Many people deal with this at a more severe level. They have anxiety or depression too often and can't shake a negative outlook. Their sex drive and general aliveness may be low. Those with this imbalance often develop high blood pressure, digestive disorders, peptic ulcers, poor circulation, or migraine headaches. The longer people stay stuck in it, the worse the symptoms can get. Chronic pain, anxiety attacks, fibromyalgia, and other stress-related or immune-deficiency diseases may develop. Western medicine has opted to treat the symptoms and has not always understood the cause. Treating high blood pressure with medications that block the beta receptors and treating ulcers with antacid pills can allay symptoms but can also create imbalances in other parts of the body.

It's common for people who are over-anxious or out-of-sorts to eat too much. This can come from a subconscious desire to get some relief from fight-or-flight by forcing the activation of digestion, which cools down the nervous system and brings it to the parasympathetic side. [See diagram next page.] But there's a better way to do this than overeating!

Dr. Andrew Weil, a proponent of integrative and holistic medicine, points out that in the West there isn't even a standardized diagnosis for this nervous system imbalance, but practitioners of oriental medicine have known about it for centuries. What's the easiest, most



natural way to bring your nervous system back into balance? It's through conscious breathing.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS.

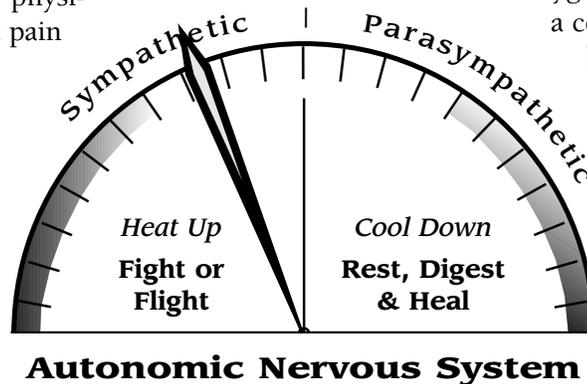
You have two nervous systems: the voluntary one (the central nervous system) and the involuntary, automatic one (the autonomic nervous system). The autonomic system governs all the unconscious functions of the body, such as heart rate, circulation, and blood pressure, hormone secretion, digestion, elimination, and sexual function. The disorders listed earlier are all imbalances in these internal, automatic systems. But how do we access the autonomic system if this part of us is hidden, unconscious, and automatic? How do we get in there to reestablish balance or to do maintenance and repair? The breath is the doorway, because it's the only system in our bodies that works both consciously and unconsciously.

The autonomic system has two opposing sides, called the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. These are the two sides of the gauge, one hot and one cold. Ideally they should interact freely with each other and come into dominance depending on the situation. We are meant to move into the sympathetic side in times of physical exertion, excitement, emergency, and stress. That's the hot side, and it serves a valuable purpose where fight or flight is necessary! When the sympathetic system is stimulated, heart rate increases, as does sweating; the blood vessels dilate in the large muscle groups, so more blood is diverted to them. Adrenaline rushes and we are alert and prepared to handle

whatever extra stress we are in. Brain dominance shifts from the frontal lobes to the posterior, from the ability to use complex logic and higher logic and intelligence to using only black-and-white, yes-or-no, primitive thinking.

The problem is that many of us can't easily rebalance to a neutral or relaxed state when the stress or upset has passed. We are supposed to move from this hot reflex to periods of cooling down when the parasympathetic nerves and their functions take over. This usually occurs during sleep and with daily food digestion and waste elimination. The immune system and many other complex internal functions only perform well when the parasympathetic is active. When we're stuck in the sympathetic, the parasympathetic functions don't all get their chance. So how and why do we get stuck in the sympathetic and how do we get unstuck? Our current load of daily stress and constant overstimulation play their parts, as does poor nutrition. But unresolved past distress compounds it.

Here's a graphic example that we use in our breathwork seminars. Take an empty clear plastic drinking bottle, and squeeze and dent it all over. This illustrates the state of many people's nervous systems and of their breathing patterns. Every physical, mental, or emotional pain or trauma that we have endured throughout our lives, but which has not been properly released and healed, leaves its record as a dent in our nervous systems, and a self-protecting, self-defensive reflex memory gets stored in our physical cells. We call these cellular memories. Over time, as these memories build up, we lose functionality and flexibility in the damaged areas of our bodies. We may also become more negative and rigid mentally, and more fearful or angry emotionally, especially when something happens that reminds us of this trauma from the past. We are apt to overreact to our daily stresses because of those earlier similar



memories we are still dealing with. We tend to feel less safe emotionally, which can lead to the self-defensive behavior patterns of fight (belligerence) or flight (withdrawal).

Soon a host of symptoms can start to appear. The major ones are listed. We are witnessing here the overlapping interplay between the physical, the emotional, and the mental parts of ourselves and how damage can cross over. Addressing this holistically through the power of breathing can activate the healing process.

So back to our dented bottle. We blow into it and some of the dents will pop out. Blow again and more will come out. The bottle can eventually return to its original shape. In the body, we call that original form our *energetic blueprint*. Could it be that easy? Well, almost!

CONSCIOUS BREATHING HEALS!

The breath is the doorway to the healing of the imbalance in the autonomic nervous system and all the bodily functions it governs. When we use specific regenerative breathing techniques and engage in consciously expanding our shut-down or imbalanced breathing patterns, we are pushing against those dents—taking our bodies on a trip to the “body shop.” We start the process

of oxygenation and detoxification at a cellular level. This allows our bodies to clear away stored memories of distress and trauma.

This can result in the balancing of the respiratory, nervous, and endocrine systems—in fact, all of our systems.

It works and it feels great! Most people

who come to our seminars feel more de-stressed and at peace than they've felt in a long time.

There are many methods we can use to naturally resolve the past and heal our bodies, our minds, and our emotions. People are catching on to the fact that suppression of symptoms through drugs, whether medical or recreational, is a lose-lose equation. This doesn't solve the

core problem, and it often creates more problems of its own. Breathwork is a safe, fun, and natural alternative.

A BETTER SEX LIFE. Sex that is enjoyable and relaxed is only possible when that gauge governing the sympathetic and the parasympathetic is resting comfortably in the middle and free to toggle back and forth as needed. Working simultaneously, both these systems are responsible for sexual arousal and orgasm. If the dial is too far off in one direction, either temporarily or chronically, you are either too stressed (over-amped) or too relaxed (disinterested) for sex.

“OK, I’M SOLD. SO WHAT DO I DO?”

Even slowing down and paying attention to your breath will advance you in the direction of a balanced nervous system. Find a time when you can sit down, preferably in fresh air, for some good breathing. Close your eyes and still yourself. For this cleansing type of breath, we do mouth breathing, although most normal breathing will be through the nose.

After a good exhalation, fill yourself with air starting with the lower abdomen. Allow the sides and lower back to expand also. After you are nice and full down below, let your ribs expand outward, but try not to lift your ribs upward with your shoulder and neck muscles. Don’t hold your breath at the top. Just let it go freely and easily—like a wave crashing on the shore and spilling the momentum it has gathered. Your breath and your spine will make such a wave as you breathe this way. Feel your body relaxing totally on the exhale. No need to push out with force or purse the lips and blow with a “Whoooo” sound. The sound should be “Haaaaa” passing through an open throat and a relaxed jaw. If it feels natural, allow yourself to

pause at the bottom of the exhale. As you empty your lungs, relax; then the vacuum will be filled again with the next in-breath.

If you are stressed, agitated, or upset (over-active sympathetic) you can modify this full breathing technique to calm down and get back into balance by simply slowing down on the exhale. Breathe in for a count of four and breathe out for a count of eight. Keep it gentle, deep, rhythmic and smooth, with no pauses at the top or bottom of the breath. You can do ten or twenty breaths, or until you feel the difference. Over time, through this simple self-healing technique, you can make good progress even with some of the symptoms described earlier.

Stress and trauma are often unavoidable in our modern world, but we can give our body the parasympathetic buffer zone it needs to handle things better. And we can do the work to clear away our backlog of past distress. The breath should become your best ally to accomplish this. In the safe environment of our seminars we do a more powerful, in-depth conscious breathing session under

the guidance of trained breathwork facilitators. We lie down and breathe for about an hour with more-than-usual volume and intensity. Don’t try this at home until you are well experienced with it, but you can safely do twenty-minute sessions on your own with good results.

The oxygenation of cells and the renewed energy flow achieved through in-depth breathwork trigger the body’s self-cleansing and repair mechanisms in a very pleasant and powerful way. Even one session can produce results that are real and remarkable. In later sessions, we can more actively direct the breath to specific areas of need in the body and can combine breathwork with other holistic therapies. Good breathing is so central to every part of our lives. Enter into regular breathwork and you will transform your health and your life—guaranteed!

Stress and trauma are often unavoidable in our modern world, but we can give our body the parasympathetic buffer zone it needs to handle things better. And we can do the work to clear away our backlog of past distress. The breath should become your best ally to accomplish this.



Oxygen Is Life!

It Does More Than You Think

Michael Grant White

Oxxygen is life's first food. In proper balance, it vitalizes our body, calms the mind, and stabilizes the nervous system. Without oxygen we cannot absorb important vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. When our cells lack oxygen, they weaken and die. Without oxygen, nothing works very well at all!

Oxygen (O_2) and glucose sugars ($C_6H_{12}O_6$) create energy for use in the body through metabolism in the form of high-energy phosphate bonds, especially adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the primary energy currency of our cells. Water (H_2O) dissolves carbon dioxide (CO_2) and facilitates the hydrolysis (breakdown for use) of these energy-yielding phosphate bonds. Preliminary research demonstrates that ATP may be an analog to one aspect of what many call *qi* or *chi*, *prana*, *élan vital*, *pneuma*, or life-force energy.

The American Heart Association states that over 1.5 million people die every year from heart conditions and that 70% of our population has some evidence of heart

problems. Most heart attacks originate from the heart's failure to receive adequate oxygen. Of course, maintaining one's arteries and capillaries for easy blood passage is important, but the fastest way to get oxygen right now is to breathe better.

Hypoxia (oxygen starvation) causes sympathetic nervous system overstimulation, inviting heart-rate increase, adrenal activation, and many other physiological changes as our bodies sound the alarm. Emotional and physical stress, anxiety, danger, or emergency create high oxygen loss. During episodes of stress and following physical exertion, the body uses up its oxygen stores to bring the nervous system back into a parasympathetic balance.

Too much fight or flight can invite eventual cardiac troubles. Stress that never lets up causes the heart to work harder to get the oxygen it needs. In an oxygen-starved environment, it may eventually collapse from overwork. Many stressful states can be partially or completely neutralized through proper breathing development and function.

The essential element in air that carries the vital charge of chi turns out to be neither oxygen, nor nitrogen, nor any other gaseous chemical, but rather the negative ion—a tiny, highly active molecular fragment that carries a negative electrical charge equivalent to that of one electron. By contrast, pollutants such as dust, smoke, and toxic chemicals are borne on the air in the form of large, sluggish, polymolecular ions that carry a positive charge.... In clean country air, the average ratio of negative to positive ions is about three to one. In polluted city air, it drops drastically to about one negative ion against 500 positive ions! The vitality of negative ions in air is also destroyed by air-conditioning, central heating and closed spaces.... In nature, air is naturally ionized by the action of short-wave electromagnetic radiation from the sun and by other cosmic rays, which bombard air molecules and impart vital energy to the fragments. The movement and evaporation of large bodies of water also ionize the air above them. A third method of natural ionization is the unobstructed flow of wind over wide-open spaces. The most potent atmospheric chi is thus found at high altitudes, where solar and cosmic radiation are strongest, winds are constant, and water takes the form of rushing streams and open lakes.

The Tao of Health, Sex and Longevity: A Modern Practical Guide to the Ancient Way
by Daniel P. Reid

Fresh fruits, vegetables, and rainwater contain oxygen. Green is the color of chlorophyll, or liquid oxygen, so green vegetables and especially high-chlorophyll plants like blue-green algae contain the most oxygen. Meat contains no oxygen and is “used protein.” The body must employ a large amount of energy to break meat down into amino acids so it can recycle these building blocks and create usable protein, like building a car from used parts.

Cakes, candies, cookies, all empty carbs, and sugar contain no oxygen. Cooked and processed foods and stagnant water contain little or none. I call these “negative foods” as they use up more oxygen than they give off. Processed sugars, white flour, unhealthy fats, french fries, and pizza are major oxygen robbers. You can offset some of this loss by eating pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables daily. Not portions—pounds. Taking digestive enzymes and oxygen-rich nutritional supplements can also help.

Contrary to popular opinion, oxygen may, but may not, cause the body to relax. Oxygen can assist the blood toward achieving a balanced pH level, but this does not ensure relaxation. More important factors that determine our relaxation response are how the body takes in the oxygen, whether it reaches the cells, and whether the autonomic nervous system is enervated sympathetically (through upper-chest breathing) or parasympathetically (through lower-diaphragmatic breathing) or by a combination of both.

Insufficient oxygen in our cells causes pain to be experienced more acutely than when oxygen supplies are ample. But breathing more does not ensure an increased oxygen supply. Breathing too quickly may cause a lessened oxygen supply to the cells and create an oxygen/carbon dioxide imbalance, sending more oxygen to the plasma but less to the cells. Carbon dioxide, due to its relationship with global warming, has received a lot of bad press, but we could not live without it. Carbon dioxide needs to be at a certain level in the plasma before the cells will take up oxygen.

Oxygen makes up almost 50% of the earth’s surface by weight, 42% of all healthy vegetation, 85% of seawater, 46% of igneous rock, and 47% of non-chemicalized, aerated dry soil. Overall oxygen levels on the planet at sea level are at about 20.8%. However, in basements, polluted cities, poorly ventilated offices, airplanes, etc., oxygen levels are much lower.

A common misconception is that a hundred years ago atmospheric oxygen was much higher than it is today. According to the Scripps Institute, there is no atmospheric oxygen shortage. Water tests from 10,000-year-old glaciers prove that the oxygen supply hasn't changed much at all. The rain forests are a significant supplier of oxygen (about 10%), but the oceans with their many forms of blue-green algae are the major suppliers of the earth's oxygen. Polluting the seas is asking for rampant sickness and accelerated aging for everyone, including fish, whales, and dolphins.

When slow, deep breathing and moderate body motion is activated, there is an increased demand for oxygen molecules, which are taken up from the blood. The potential for neutralizing free radicals as they bond with this available oxygen may be greatly accelerated when regular breathing, slightly deeper but still easy, is included in a person's regular daily health routine.

Your lungs will deteriorate 9%–25% per decade (Framingham study, www.breathing.com/articles/clinical-studies.htm) unless you do something to maintain them. Exercise is mandatory. Excessive stress in exercising can actually cause breathing blocks that invite inadequate levels of oxygen. The more we tighten up the primary and accessory breathing muscles, the more we cause the alveoli in our lungs (where oxygen goes into the bloodstream) to clog up with waste products. This will impede the body's ability to absorb oxygen, we will slowly suffocate, and our life spans will shorten.

As our cells grow older, they lose their ability to carry oxygen. As the liver ages, it robs increasing amounts of oxygen reserves for detoxification, often leaving the other body systems with an oxygen shortage. When needed, the cells send signals to send more oxygen. Our brains need it most, so when oxygen is in short supply in the body, our brains suffer the consequences.

For optimum health, learn to breathe better—fuller, easier, deeper, slower. Eat more nutritious and oxygen-rich foods with more live enzymes to make sure you digest what you eat. And exercise moderately without excessive straining, gasping, or breath-heaving. When you exercise, remember that physical stress creates very high oxygen loss. If stress and conditioning helped the organism to survive, then why wouldn't athletes live to be at least 120? Stress can condition muscles, but that is not the key to longevity. Maximum oxygen and energy intake with minimal expenditure plus breathing volume and flow rate (Framingham study) are the keys to longevity. Gentle natural breathing, breathing development techniques, regular cleansing of toxins, and replenishment of energy stores seem to be the best means to a longer and more joyful, energetic, and peaceful life.

When oxygen levels are increased, the red blood cells pick up the extra oxygen and provide it to our body tissues. Waste gases and toxins are removed more efficiently and cells begin to function normally. Anaerobic viruses, bacteria, and fungi, unable to live in an oxygen-enriched environment, are defeated. Oxygen builds resistance to infections like yeast (*candida albicans*) that thrive in an oxygen-deficient environment. Oxygen helps to neutralize acids in our body, such as lactic acid resulting from muscle overload. Our body's chemical reactions are fired up due to the increased oxygen levels. We burn fat more efficiently. We feel better, our body is healthier, and we think more clearly. Here are more benefits:

- Removes free radicals
- Reduces tissue swelling
- Increases neuronal energy metabolism in the brain
- Can create sustained cognitive improvement
- Wakes up sleeping (idling) brain cells that are metabolizing enough to stay alive but are not actively "firing"
- Enhances the body's ability to fight bacterial and viral infections
- Deactivates toxins and poisons (e.g., side effects from some chemotherapy, spider bites, air pollution, etc.)
- Enhances wound healing (stimulates new capillaries)
- Creates an immediate aerobic state
- Acts as an anti-inflammatory

www.Breathing.com

Exhale!

What comes first, the inhale or the exhale? A chicken-or-egg question. Naturally, when we think of inhaling we think of filling the lungs, and with exhaling we think of emptying the lungs. Life starts with our very first inbreath and ends with our last outbreath. But in between, no doubt, it's a circle. Just for fun, let's look at the exhale in some other ways. Maybe we'll conclude that the exhale often comes first!

Think of the Big Bang as God's original out-breath when creating the cosmos. Now think of Genesis 2:7, *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life; and man became a living soul.* With these two primal exhales, we think of expanding and giving life, rather than emptying.

Now think of blowing through a pipe. Because there are holes at both ends, we empty it while filling it. It's a process of giving while receiving.

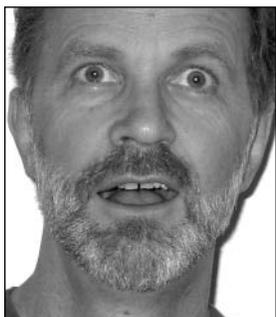
Here's another point of view. What do you say when you see a glorious sunset? "Aaahhhhhh!" Now you see the exhale as relaxation, contemplation of beauty, a way of opening up and bringing some of that beauty into yourself and merging with it.

Here are some other exhaling sounds that we could say are counterproductive. A forced "Whooooo" through pursed lips. An exasperated "Huhhhh!" (or its nasal variety) when you're mad. A "Humphffffff!" when you've been insulted and you're stomping out the door. What about a gasp? This is sucking in and holding the breath out of fear, danger, or pain. Let's examine these a little closer.

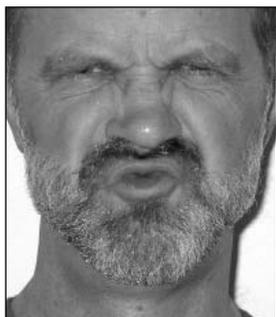
As a breathworker and bodyworker, I've learned a lot over the years from studying breathing physiology and using the breath as a therapeutic tool. I've come to respect the exhale as something more than what meets the eye.

The exhale releases carbon dioxide from the lungs. But did you know that most of the body's toxins are, or should be, mixed with methane gas in the liver and expelled through the exhale? Did you know that fatigue and other ill-health conditions often result from a build-up of toxins not released sufficiently through the exhale? How does the body handle an overload of toxins? One common way is by wrapping and buffering the toxins in fat cells and storing them until the body can deal with them properly. "Ho ho ho!" as jolly round Santa would say, which reminds us that laughing, "Ha ha ha!" is a very healthful exhale indeed!

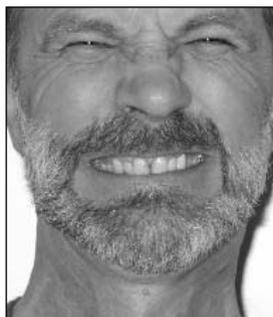
Have you ever seen the red faces of people when they're lifting heavy weights? They're probably doing a "Whoooooo" through tight, pursed lips, or a "SSssss" or "FFFfff" through teeth or lips, or worse, they're holding their breath during the exertion with eyes popping and heart pounding. Can any of that be good for the system?



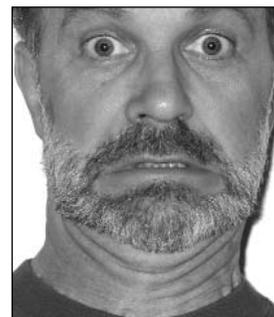
The Aaahhhhh! Relaxed, gazing-at-sunset exhale.



The Whoooooo! Tight-lipped, forced exhale. Bad for your body!



The Ssssssss! Exhaling through teeth. See its cousin, next page.



The Gasp. Not an exhale. Often used when exhaling would be better.

During a breathwork session, we do a cleansing breath, which includes an open-mouthed, relaxed-jaw “Haaaaaaa.” Picture a wave crashing on the shore, freely spilling its momentum. In your body, the wave is the ideal inhale, filling the lower torso first. Next the wave rolls up, spreading your ribs and rippling up your spine. Without pausing at the top, you exhale, neither pushing out nor holding back. All your muscles relax and tensions go. Gravity takes over.

Let’s revisit the jaw thing. With those angry, insulted exhales, you can imagine they are accompanied by a clenched jaw. Fight-or-flight, stress, and withheld anger can increase jaw tension, sometimes chronically so. Right now, place your fingertips on your cheekbones, then go down about half an inch into the meaty muscle just below. Press in. It hurts, doesn’t it? That’s your jaw-flapping muscle, and it’s tight on most people. Massage it with slow circular movements. Allow your jaw to hang down more and more.

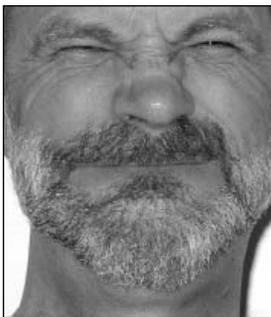
Now imagine a totally jaw-dropping experience. Let’s say you’re Nicholas Cage in *National Treasure*, and you just saw the billions of dollars of loot. You might breathe in with surprise, but your next exhale would be totally relaxed and your jaw would be hanging as the reality of it all sank in.

Now lie down and do the things just described, especially that letting-go exhale through the mouth. Roll the inhale up from the belly, then let it all spill out. Hear the wave crashing on the shore. Feel your muscles, organs, skeletal system, and nervous system all relaxing. This is an effective detoxing and cleansing breath.

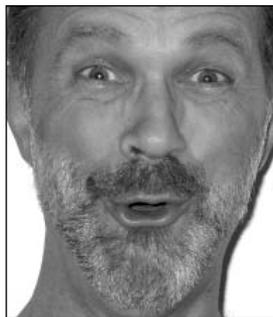
Pursing the lips will make you hold back and re-internalize some of those toxins and some of the carbon dioxide. A thick, fat tongue or a tight jaw can do the same. Others have a very reserved and almost timid exhale, “hhhhhhhhhh” or “ffffffffffff.” These can calm the system, but they won’t necessarily detox it. Don’t push out on the exhale, which can make you dizzy and create an oxygen/carbon dioxide imbalance. Just let go.

After about ten of these, you may feel aches and pains coming to your awareness that you didn’t realize you had. Stored tension goes numb after a while, when your nervous system realizes you’re not paying attention. So this is a good chance to reacquaint yourself with your body and do some self-healing. My friend KRS Edstrom, an alternative health practitioner, has a program on CD called *Defeat Pain*. [See www.askkrs.com.] In it, she asks you to visualize the painful area dissipating and spreading out in concentric rings like when a pebble hits the water. “You feel the pain, you allow the waves to spread.” Try this along with your smooth exhales. You’ll be communicating with your tension. It will understand and let go.

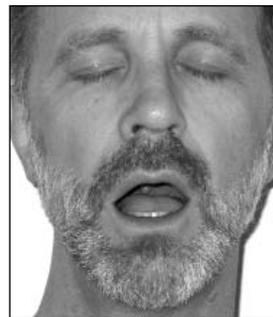
I use a similar technique when giving a massage. If I’m going to press on someone’s tense, painful muscle, I’ll do it only while they’re expressing one of these relaxing exhales. Your first instinct when someone is pressing on a sore spot would be to gasp, hold your breath, and tighten up even more. Doing the opposite, exhaling with an open-mouthed “Haaaaaaaaa” while relaxing



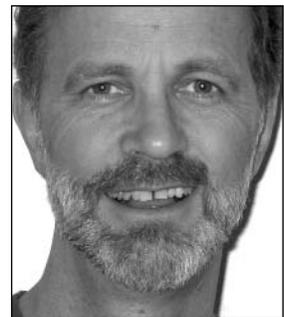
The FFFfff! Why put your body through this kind of an exhale?



A thin person’s Ho ho ho! Next to air, jolliness is the #1 health tonic.



This looks like snoring, but it’s the ideal Haaaaaa exhale for breathwork.



OK—rubber face back to normal. What a way to make a living!

the muscle, is very effective. I don't use the nasal equivalent of this until toward the end of the massage, because I want to encourage a more voluminous, cleansing, detoxing exhale.

Earlier, we visualized a pipe with the exhale coming in at one end and exiting at the other. Now imagine that the pipe is the nozzle of a blacksmith's bellows. The inhale is like the filling of the bellows. With the exhale, you can direct the flow of air and energy to a specific area of the body for healing.

Those who practice hands-on healing techniques and other energy work are familiar with sending energy through their hands in conjunction with their exhale. You can add further visualizations to this. For instance, as you breathe in, open your crown and let the universal energy flow into you. Now charge it with the love of your heart, then send it down your arms and out your hands. Energy follows thought. Love charges and attracts more energy.

For self-healing, direct the flow of energy to your own areas of chronic pain, emotional turmoil, poor circulation, etc. Feed yourself energy, especially where you need it most.

Add love and letting-go to the mixture. It works.

In our breathwork seminars, we go even deeper into a letting-go series of exhales, along with well-tuned inhales, of course. The breathing process we use takes people into deeper levels of releasing old injuries and traumas, even emotional stress and hurt, even negative thoughts and attitudes.

Our brain and internal nervous system and our cells themselves hold the memory of past trauma, which can show up as tension, fight-or-flight responses, protectiveness in parts of the body, or emotional and mental withdrawal. It's as if the burdensome events of the past get backlogged just like those toxins, sometimes to a dangerous point of overload.

Let breathing, in conjunction with other natural healing methods, free you from the burdens of your past. Oxygen intake, combined with glorious detoxing exhales, will provide you with more energy for your pursuit of happiness!

Recent studies in mainland China show that when deep breathing is performed with the mind firmly focused on a certain part of the body, that part registers a strong electric charge and grows warm. This accords well with the findings of Dr. Chang Rui, director of the imperial medical institute during the Southern Sung Dynasty (1127–1279):

Mind is the leader of energy. Where mind goes, energy follows. When a certain part of the body is ailing, use the mind to draw energy to the affected area and it will correct the condition.

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