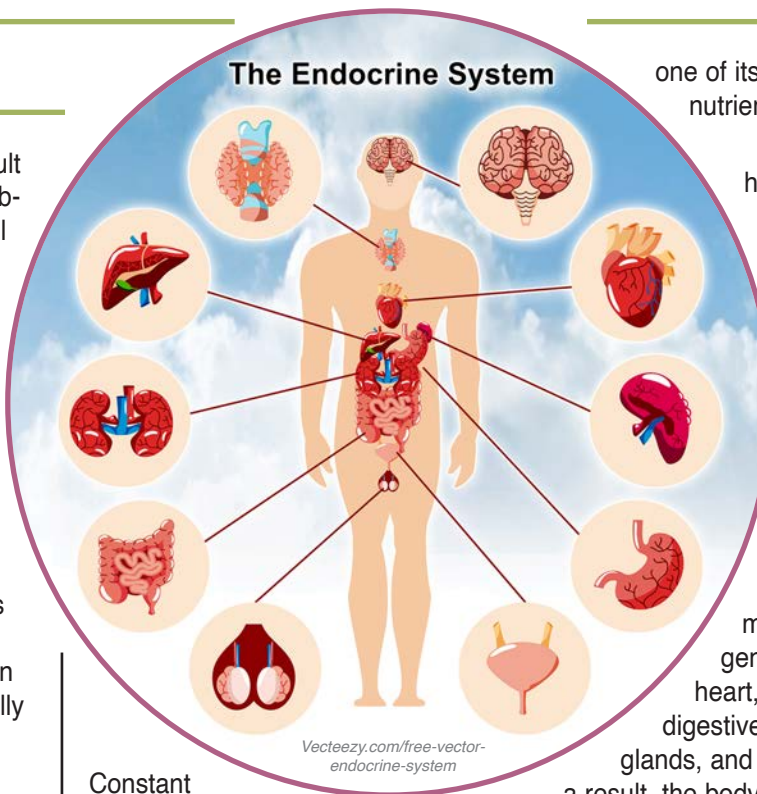


Optimal Breathing for Endocrine & Hormone Balance

Bethel Wagner

Thyroid disease, PMS, difficult menopause, sluggish metabolism, diabetes. What do all of these have in common? They are hormonal problems caused by or connected to imbalances in the endocrine system. The endocrine system includes the hypothalamus, pineal gland, pituitary gland, thyroid gland, parathyroid glands, thymus, adrenal glands, and pancreas. The hormones produced and released by the endocrine glands regulate and coordinate most of the processes in your body. When the endocrine system is chronically out of balance, serious health issues will surface!



one of its most vital nutrients—oxygen!

On the other hand, balanced, diaphragmatic breathing supports relaxation, a balanced nervous system, and a balanced endocrine system.

Diaphragmatic breathing massages and gently stimulates the heart, spinal column, digestive organs, adrenal glands, and vagus nerve. As

a result, the body receives calming signals. This tells the hypothalamus and pituitary they can relax, halting the continual cascade of stress hormones. The result is that endocrine function and hormone production can shift toward a more balanced state.

Optimal breathing patterns also support detoxification. When we exhale, we release waste products from the body. This waste removal system can be amplified with specific breathing patterns and practices. For instance, when we allow relaxed, open exhales through the mouth during breathwork practice. Another detoxifying pattern is the blow breath, similar to the "breath of fire" from yoga, but performed through the mouth rather than the nose. It is common to experience a metallic or other "off" taste due to the release of toxins during

Constant stress and hormone-disrupting chemicals are two significant factors causing endocrine system disruptions. Unfortunately, these things are prevalent in most people's lives today. No wonder so many are struggling with their health!

But what does all of this have to do with breathing? Everything! Optimal breathing can help in two ways. Firstly, by taming chronic stress responses and, secondly, by promoting healthy detoxification. Let's look at how breathing well can de-stress and detoxify the body.

People in a state of stress typically breathe very shallowly and often into the upper chest. They tend to carry excess tension in their jaw, neck, shoulders, or abdomen, preventing full expansion of the lungs. It also deprives the body of



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breathwork. With regular practice, this typically goes away as the body reduces its toxic burden.

Additionally, correct breathing supports detoxification by stimulating and regulating digestion and elimination. As mentioned above, diaphragmatic breathing massages the digestive organs. It activates the wave-like motion of the intestines, which encourages healthy elimination and waste removal. This is crucial to the body's ability to detox because sluggish elimination allows toxins and excess hormones to be reabsorbed and stored throughout the body.

Restoring optimal endocrine and hormone balance has many pieces, including a whole-foods diet, avoiding toxic chemicals, regular movement, and good sleep hygiene. That said, learning to breathe well is one of the most powerful tools available. Optimal breathing can shut off the chronic fight-or-flight response and give the body the bandwidth to restore hormone and endocrine balance! ■

If you are interested in trying breathwork for yourself, contact Sage Wellness Center today. One-on-one and group sessions are available in person and online.

If you are in crisis and want help, call the Montana **Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 24/7: **NOW DIAL 988****

Much more than just a switch to an easier-to-remember number, it represents a holistic revision of the State's suicide prevention and mental-health crisis-management system.

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