

BREATHWORK & YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM





HELLO & WELCOME!

My name is Prema, and I am a somatic psychotherapist, educator, and transformational retreat facilitator. I love sharing knowledge about body-based methods for releasing the effects of stress and trauma and living more passionately and with purpose. I'm thrilled you have found my website and are interested in finding ways to bring this work into your life!

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Introduction

WHY BREATHWORK?



In the hustle and bustle of modern life, we often overlook the profound impact that our breath can have on our well-being. But when we consider that, on average, we take about 16 breaths per minute, that means we breathe about 960 breaths an hour, 23,040 breaths a day, 8,409,600 a year!

We can then quickly start to see how our breath is the single most important source of energy that we take in on a moment-to-moment basis - energy that can be used to fuel our body's healing mechanisms.

There is a way of
breathing
That's a shame and a
suffocation
And there's another
way of expiring,
A love breath,
That lets you open
infinitely.
~ Rumi

Introduction

WHY BREATHWORK?

Studies show that breathwork can help alleviate stress and anxiety, regulate emotions, maintain optimal blood pressure, slow down heart rate, and strengthen the resilience and regulation of the nervous system.

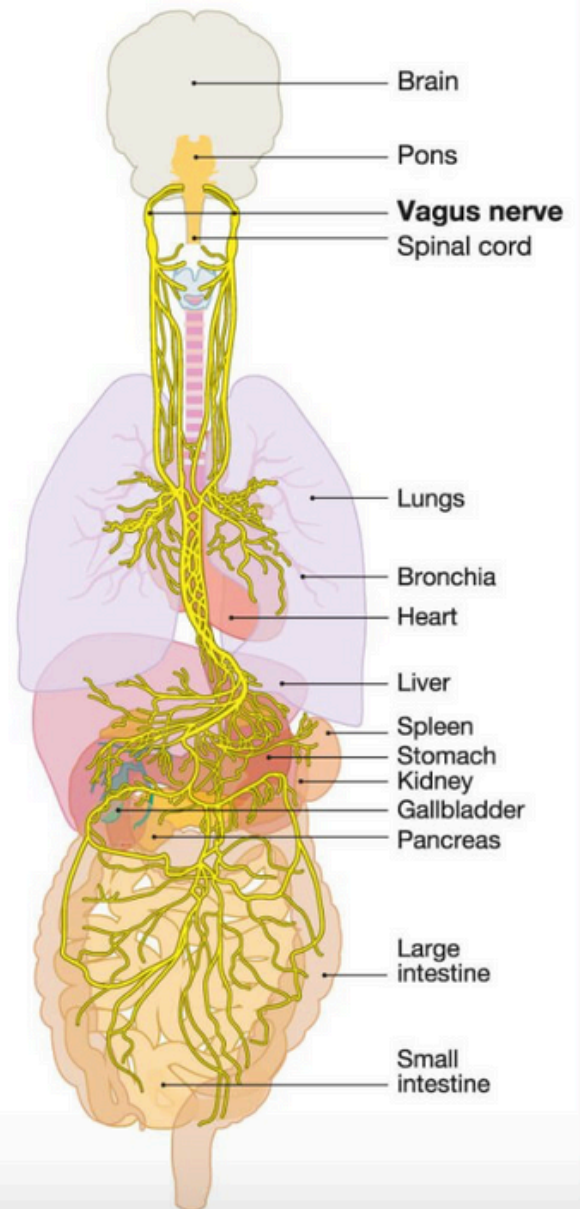
Researchers attribute many of breathwork's health benefits to its ability to impact the functioning and health of the vagus nerve positively. As the longest nerve in our body, the vagus nerve connects to most of our major organs. It is also the major component of the parasympathetic branch of our nervous system, and its healthy functioning supports us in feeling relaxed, emotionally regulated, safe, and connected.

Please click here to watch a brief video introducing the benefits and contraindications of breathwork:

TAP TO PLAY



The Vagus Nerve



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK



This guidebook contains five recorded breathwork practices and self-reflection exercises to track how these practices affect your nervous system and overall well-being. I suggest trying the practices more than once to understand what works best for your nervous system and how that can change over time as you build more nervous system regulation and capacity through your breath.

As you move through the videos and information in this guidebook, you can always choose whether or not you want to try a particular practice, as what works for one person may not resonate with another. If you choose to explore the breathwork practices, ensure that you do so in a safe and comfortable environment. It is advisable to consult with a healthcare professional beforehand, especially if you have any pre-existing medical conditions or concerns or you are pregnant. Always listen to your body and practice at your own pace, respecting your limits. Feel free to modify or skip any practice that doesn't align with your comfort level or needs.

Practice #1

COHERENT BREATHING



The breathwork practice for the start of our guidebook is an eight-minute coherent breath practice. Coherent breathing is a technique that involves breathing at a specific rhythm, and the recorded practice is a 4-second inhalation followed by a 6-second exhalation. Regular practice has shown various benefits, such as reducing stress, improving focus, and enhancing overall well-being.

Coherent breathing also affects the phrenic nerve, which improves blood circulation, and the amygdala, a part of the brain that regulates emotions, fear, and anxiety.

TAP TO PLAY



SELF-REFLECTION

Following your breath practice take a few moment to notice and reflect on how it impacted you.

Date:

How many minutes of practice:

How was this breathwork practice for you today?

PHYSICAL

	Not at all	Somewha	Not sure	Very much
It supported my body to relax	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more energized or alert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more present in my body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more tired or heavy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was physically comfortable to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Check-in with your feelings, what do you notice?

EMOTIONAL

	Not at all	Somewha	Not sure	Very much
I feel more calm	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more focused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more happy or optimistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Practice #2

MINDFUL BREATHING



Here is a new breathwork practice for you to explore. It is a ten-minute guided breath practice that uses slow, deep breathing to calm the mind while connecting to your body sensations and inviting a deep state of relaxation. This type of breathing can signal safety to your vagus nerve, thus lowering your heart rate and reducing bodily tension. You can watch the video by clicking here:

TAP TO PLAY



“Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I smile. Dwelling in the present moment, I know this is a wonderful moment.”
~ Thich Nhat Hanh

SELF-REFLECTION

Following your breath practice take a few moment to notice and reflect on how it impacted you.

Date:

How many minutes of practice:

How was this breathwork practice for you today?

PHYSICAL

	Not at all	Somewha	Not sure	Very much
It supported my body to relax	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more energized or alert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more present in my body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more tired or heavy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was physically comfortable to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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EMOTIONAL

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I feel more focused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more happy or optimistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Practice #3

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING



Our third breathwork practice is a ten-minute guided lesson that teaches diaphragmatic breathing. This type of breathing is deeper and slower than our normal breath pattern, which tends to be more in our chest. Research has shown that this practice can support relaxation, improve digestion and reduce anxiety.

TAP TO PLAY



Diaphragmatic breathing, or “belly breathing,” engages the diaphragm, intercostal, abdominal, and pelvic floor muscles. This can help the lungs fill more efficiently and increase vagal tone.

SELF-REFLECTION

Following your breath practice take a few moment to notice and reflect on how it impacted you.

Date:

How many minutes of practice:

How was this breathwork practice for you today?

PHYSICAL

	Not at all	Somewha	Not sure	Very much
It supported my body to relax	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more energized or alert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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It was physically comfortable to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Check-in with your feelings, what do you notice?

EMOTIONAL

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I feel anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more happy or optimistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Practice #4 BOX BREATHING



Here is a new breathwork practice available for you to explore. It is a ten-minute guided breath practice that teaches a technique called Box Breathing. This mindful breathwork practice promotes relaxation, reduces stress, and enhances focus by regulating the breath and calming the nervous system. You can watch the video here:

TAP TO PLAY



Box breathing is a simple yet powerful practice that can heighten performance and concentration while also being a powerful stress reliever.

SELF-REFLECTION

Following your breath practice take a few moment to notice and reflect on how it impacted you.

Date:

How many minutes of practice:

How was this breathwork practice for you today?

PHYSICAL

	Not at all	Somewha	Not sure	Very much
It supported my body to relax	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more energized or alert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more present in my body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more tired or heavy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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EMOTIONAL

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I feel more focused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more happy or optimistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Practice #5

VITALITY BREATHING



Our final breath practice for this guidebook is a 10-minute guided breathwork practice to help you focus and energize your mind. It combines some of the breath patterns you have already learned with some gentle (20-30 second) breath holds. You can watch the video by clicking below:

TAP TO PLAY



“Breathing is not only the process of inhaling and exhaling; it’s a reminder that every breath we take is a gift of life.”
~ Unknown

SELF-REFLECTION

Following your breath practice take a few moment to notice and reflect on how it impacted you.

Date:

How many minutes of practice:

How was this breathwork practice for you today?

PHYSICAL

	Not at all	Somewha	Not sure	Very much
It supported my body to relax	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more energized or alert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more present in my body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more tired or heavy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was physically comfortable to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Check-in with your feelings, what do you notice?

EMOTIONAL

	Not at all	Somewha	Not sure	Very much
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I feel more focused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more happy or optimistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In CONCLUSION



So.... what did you discover about breathwork and your nervous system after trying these different practices?

Moving forward, the invitation is to take 10-15 minutes daily and return to the practices that best support your overall sense of well-being. As we've explored throughout this eBook, the breath is a powerful bridge between our mind and body, offering a tangible tool to regulate our physiological responses and meet the challenges of modern life in a more relaxed and grounded way.

For many, breathwork is not just about the physical and emotional benefits; over time, it also leads to a deeper connection with ourselves and the world around us. Through conscious breathing techniques, we can experience greater awareness, presence, and resilience in our lives.

As you continue to deepen in breathwork, I encourage you to approach it with curiosity, compassion, and a willingness to explore its potential. May your breath be a new source of strength and vitality on your path to optimal living!

About Prema

Prema McKeever supports people worldwide to heal from the impacts of trauma. Inspired by the interconnection of mind and body and the resilience of the human heart, she has guided thousands in their healing and personal growth journey over the past 30 years. She believes that our essential purpose in life is to awaken, activate and experience the boundless potential within each of us.



She holds two Master's Degrees; the first in Chinese Medicine and the second in Psychotherapy and Spirituality. Additionally, Prema is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP) and faculty for the BioDynamic Breathwork and Trauma Release Institute (BBTRI). Her passion is facilitating the unique healing that occurs when people come together in group processes, and she is honoured to lead some of the most intensive and life-changing retreats in the world today.

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NEXT STEP?

FIND THE RIGHT
PROGRAM FOR YOU



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