

# The Mindful Breathing Guide



JUST BREATHE





WELCOME TO YOUR

# Mindful

BREATHING GUIDE

If you're like most people, you probably don't give your breathing much thought... even though it's something you do 22,000 times a day!

But it's worth paying attention to, if only for a few minutes every day.

The way you breathe is linked with your health, your stress level, your fitness, and your energy – and it can affect EVERY single cell in your body.

We created this guide to help you unlock the power of your breath.



## WELCOME

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If you haven't tried focused breathing exercises before, you will be amazed at how different you can feel in just a few minutes.

And if you have tried breathing exercises in the past, we hope you'll find a new technique or idea in this guide to help you take your practice to the next level.

At Tri Lab Endurance our mission is to help our athletes reach their full potential in all realms of their life.

We can't wait to hear how these breathing exercises work for you!



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JUST  
BREATHE

# Breathing

## 101

Before we dive into the specific breathing exercises, it's worth taking a deeper look at the basics of how breathing works and why it matters so much to your wellness.



**DID YOU KNOW THAT  
70% OF THE WASTE YOU  
EXPEL FROM YOUR BODY  
EVERY DAY IS DONE  
THROUGH YOUR BREATH?**

**Another important fact:** Your brain is more likely to trigger you to inhale because there is too much waste (carbon dioxide) building up in your blood... than because of low oxygen levels.

- When you breathe in, air enters your lungs.
- Oxygen from the air moves from your lungs to your blood.
- This oxygen provides essential fuel for every cell in your body.
- When you breathe out, carbon dioxide, a waste gas, moves from your blood to the lungs and is exhaled.
- This process is called "gas exchange" and it's essential to life.



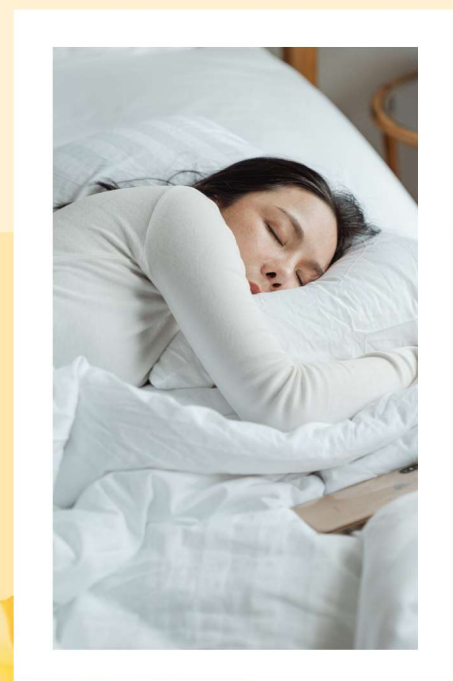


The way you breathe can leave you feeling stressed and anxious... or relaxed and calmly energized.

When you breathe deeply in a slow and steady pattern, it signals your parasympathetic nervous system to calm your body down.

*This ebook contains several breathing exercises to help you:*

- 🍃 Feel calm and energized
- 🍃 Sleep better
- 🍃 Improve your focus & concentration
- 🍃 Boost your mindfulness



# Breathing

## BASICS

Your breathing is on autopilot thanks to your medulla oblongata, which is located in your brainstem. It triggers your body to inhale.

### 4 BASIC TYPES OF BREATHING

#### 🍃 Normal “eupnea” breathing

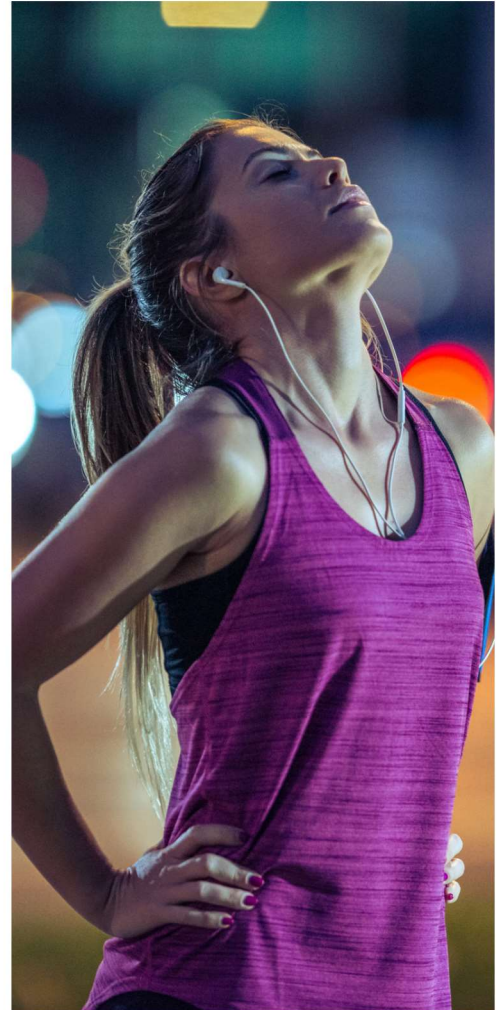
This is probably the form of breathing you’re doing right now, without giving it much thought.

Both your diaphragm (located just below your lungs) and external intercostal muscles (inside your ribs) contract and relax as you quietly breathe.

#### 🍃 Shallow “costal” breathing

This is also known as chest breathing. When your intercostal muscles contract, you breathe in air, and when they relax, air leaves your lungs, without your diaphragm assisting very much.

This kind of breathing is associated with stress, pain, anxiety, and illness.





### **Deep “diaphragmatic” breathing**

This is also known as belly breathing, and it requires your costal muscles to contract as you inhale and your diaphragm to contract as you exhale.

This type of breathing is associated with your body’s natural relaxation response.

### **Hyperpnea breathing**

This is a more intentional or forced form of breathing that you’d use for singing, playing a wind instrument, or while powerlifting or doing extremely strenuous exercise.

In addition to the normal breathing muscles, other muscles from your neck and core can assist with both breathing in and out.





## NOSE VS. MOUTH BREATHING

# *It Matters!*



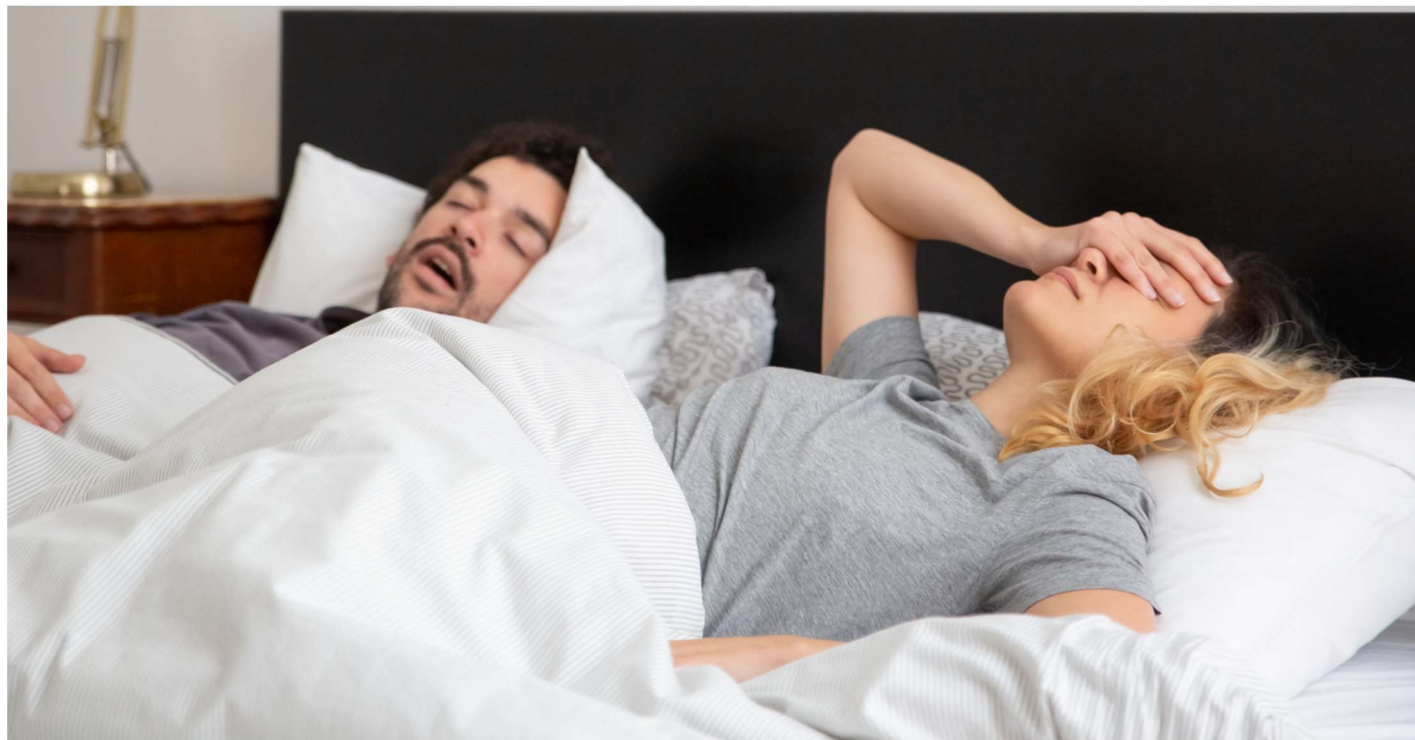
Believe it or not, there's a BIG difference between breathing through your nose and breathing through your mouth. Let's break it down.

### *Benefits of breathing through your nose:*

- 🍃 Your nose releases nitric oxide when you breathe through it, which helps widen your blood vessels and improves oxygen circulation in your body.*
- 🍃 Nasal hair filters out dust, allergens, pollen, and foreign particles so they don't reach your lungs.*
- 🍃 Your nose warms and humidifies the air you breathe, which makes it easier for your lungs to do their job.*

Just as there are benefits to breathing through your nose, there are...





### *Drawbacks to breathing through your mouth:*

- It can dry out your mouth, leading to bad breath as well as dental and jaw problems.*
- You can experience allergic reactions from inhaled particles.*
- It's linked with asthma and snoring.*
- It's also tied to sleep apnea, a dangerous condition in which you hold your breath while sleeping.*

### **NOTE:**

There might be reasons outside your control that make it challenging to breathe through your nose, such as small nostrils, congestion, or a deviated septum. If this is a concern, be sure to talk to your health care provider.



# Shallow

## BREATHING

It goes by a lot of names - chest breathing and costal breathing - but shallow breathing can set you up for feeling stressed, anxious, and tired.

When we're breathing normally, most of us breathe 12 to 18 breaths a minute, but several factors can set us up for faster, less productive, shallower breaths.

Shallow breathing is linked with:

- 🍃 *Pain*
- 🍃 *Illness or disease*
- 🍃 *Poor posture*
- 🍃 *Strenuous activity*
- 🍃 *Stress*
- 🍃 *Anger*
- 🍃 *Fear*

### *How deep is your breathing?*

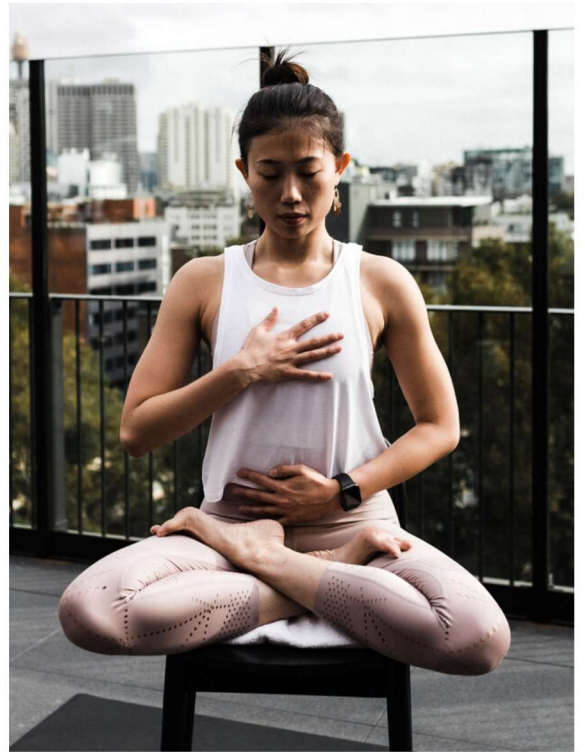
Here's a simple way to know if you're breathing from your belly: place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Now, breathe.

Does the hand on your belly move?

If it doesn't, chances are you are breathing shallowly!



# THE BENEFITS OF Belly BREATHING



There are lots of health benefits to diaphragmatic (belly) breathing:

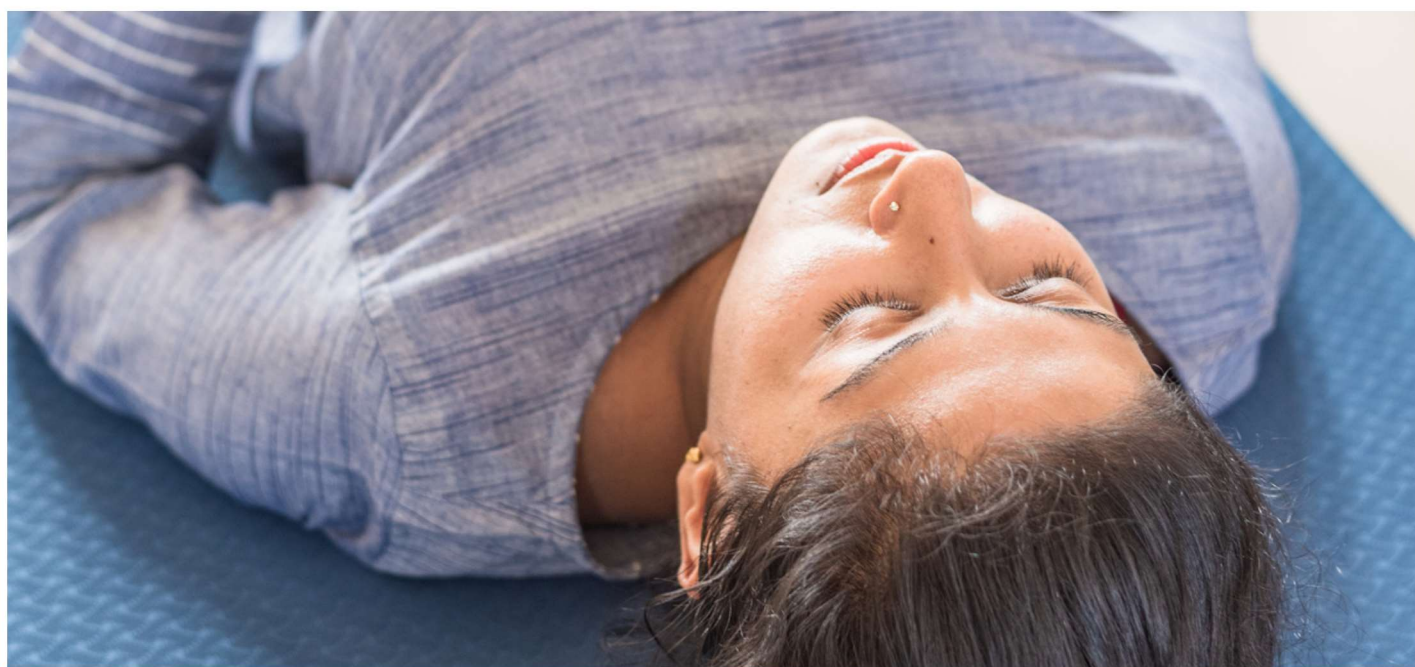
- 🍃 *It activates your body's vagus nerve and parasympathetic nervous system - aka the "rest and digest" system, which helps with mood, digestion, and boosting oxygen flow to your organs.*
- 🍃 *It helps slow your heartbeat and lower your blood pressure.*
- 🍃 *It helps your lungs do a full oxygen exchange - inhaling air & exhaling carbon dioxide.*
- 🍃 *It improves your core muscle stability.*
- 🍃 *It helps boost your ability to tolerate intense exercise.*

In a nutshell, belly breathing can help your body relax and function more effectively.

If you're stressed or are experiencing anxiety, being mindful of how you're breathing is one of the best things you can do to get into a more relaxed and centered state.

### *Try This: Belly & Nostril Breathing*

- ☛ Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat. You can rest your head on a pillow if it feels more comfortable.*
- ☛ If you'd prefer, sit tall in a chair with your chest upright and your shoulders and neck relaxed.*
- ☛ Put one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your ribs.*
- ☛ Breathe in slowly through your nose, thinking of filling your lungs all the way down to your belly. The hand on your chest should remain still, while the one on your belly should rise.*
- ☛ As you exhale through your lips, tighten your abdominal muscles so that they move inward, with the hand on your belly returning to its starting position.*
- ☛ Practice this for 5-10 breaths a couple of times a day if possible.*







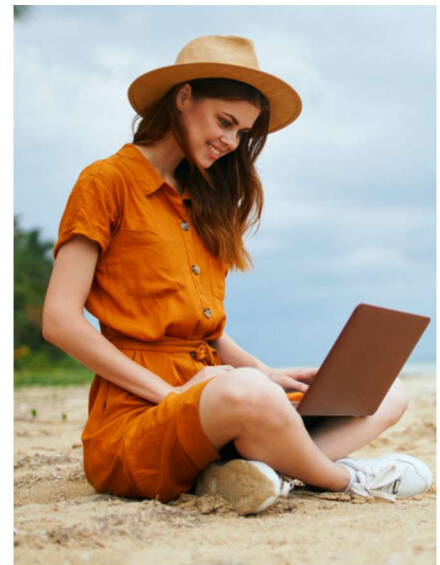
WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH MORE

# Energy?

- ✓ Benefit 1 (Having enough energy to get through your day)
- ✓ Benefit 2 (community and support)
- ✓ Benefit 3 (confidence)
- ✓ And more!

## AND IT GETS EVEN BETTER...

- ✓ Feature 1 (A proven plan - no more guesswork!)
- ✓ Feature 2 (Weekly action plans)
- ✓ Feature 3 (Coaching to help you through the rough spots)
- ✓ Feature 4 (Accountability)



*As one of our coached clients you'll get a custom plan that will lead you toward reaching your goals whether it's doing your first 5K, your first triathlon, lifting heavy weights or getting a PR.*



# BREATHING *Exercises*

## **NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN:**

Some breathing exercises can make you feel a little dizzy or lightheaded the first couple of times you do them.

Start with just a few breaths and gradually work up to 5 or more minutes of focused breathing.



## Alternate Nostril Breathing:

*Great for mindfulness & destressing, this breathing method is great for boosting mindfulness while helping you destress. It also can help you be more intentional about breathing through your nose.*

### HOW TO DO IT:

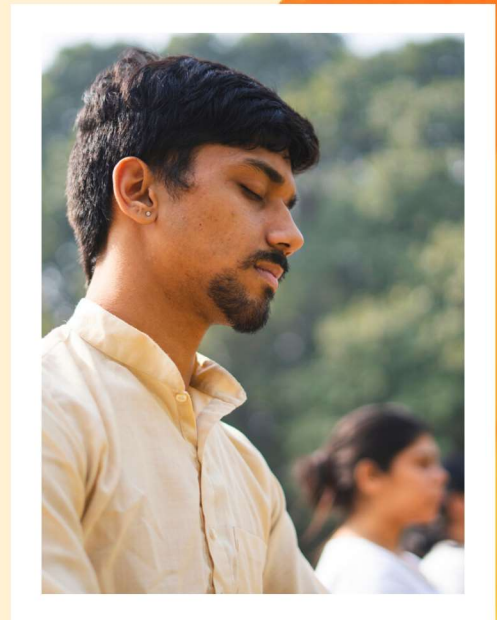
- 🌿 Sit tall with relaxed shoulders.
- 🌿 Put your right thumb on your right nostril, and inhale through your left nostril.
- 🌿 Put your right ring finger on your left nostril, and exhale through your right nostril.
- 🌿 Inhale through your right nostril.
- 🌿 Place your right thumb on your right nostril, and exhale through your left nostril.
- 🌿 This equals 1 round of alternate nostril breathing.
- 🌿 Repeat for a total of 2-5 minutes.



### Breath Focus Technique

*Great for meditation & relaxation, this breathing exercise uses several forms of breathing - along with words or phrases - to bring awareness to your breath and give you a meditative, relaxing session.*

*Choose a focus word or phrase that makes you feel relaxed or content, such as "peace," "calm," "love," "inhale calm, exhale stress," or any other word or phrase that appeals to you.*



#### HOW TO DO IT:

- 🍃 Sit or lie down in a comfortable place.
- 🍃 Notice your breathing but try not to change how you breathe. Just be aware of the breath flowing in and out of your body.
- 🍃 Take a few deep belly breaths, paying attention to the expansion and contraction of your belly.
- 🍃 Return to breathing normally, and notice any differences in how you feel now: are your shoulders and neck more relaxed?
- 🍃 Take a few shallow breaths, and return your breathing to normal. How do you feel? Do you notice any different sensations?
- 🍃 Now it's time to use your focus word or phrase for 8-10 long, slow belly breaths. As you inhale, think about your focus word, and as you exhale, let out a sigh.
- 🍃 Gradually work up to using this technique for 5-10 minutes or longer for a deeper meditation.

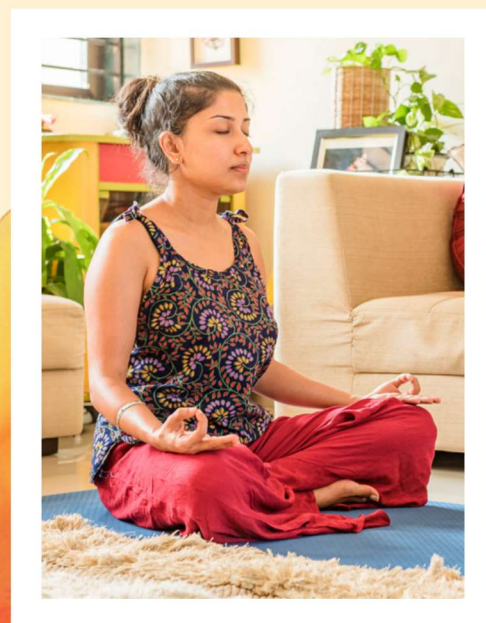


## Wim Hof Breathing Method

*Great for stress reduction, better sleep, & mental clarity, Wim Hof is a well-known extreme athlete and motivational speaker who, among other things, has trained his body to withstand freezing cold temperatures. He credits his breathing method with being one cornerstone of his health protocol.*

### HOW TO DO IT:

- 🌿 First, sit or lie down in a comfortable position that allows your lungs to expand and contract. Close your eyes and relax your mind, focusing on your breath.
- 🌿 Take in a big breath through your nose.
- 🌿 Exhale naturally through your mouth.
- 🌿 Repeat for 30 breaths.
- 🌿 Then, exhale to about 90% and hold your breath for as long as you can.
- 🌿 When your body needs to take a breath, inhale fully and hold for 15 seconds before releasing. This equals one round of Wim Hof Breathing.
- 🌿 Repeat for 3 total rounds.



## 4-7-8 Breathing

*Great for deeper relaxation & improved sleep, this surprisingly effective breathing method by Dr. Andrew Weil can help you deeply relax and fall asleep.*

### HOW TO DO IT:

- 🍃 Find a place to sit or lie down. Your chest and belly should be able to expand and contract without being constricted.
- 🍃 Rest the tip of your tongue against the roof of your mouth, behind your top front teeth. Keep it here while you're practicing the breathing method. *Note: This can be a challenge until you get used to it!*
- 🍃 Open your lips and exhale completely, making a whooshing sound. It can help to purse your lips slightly.
- 🍃 Close your lips and inhale through your nose for a count of 4.
- 🍃 Hold your breath for a count of 7.
- 🍃 Open your lips and exhale through your mouth for a count of 8, making another whooshing sound.
- 🍃 Repeat the 4-7-8 pattern of breathing for a total of four rounds. You can work your way up to eight full breaths as your body gets used to deep breathing.





## Navy Seal “Box” Breathing

*Great for staying calm & focused, this simple breathing technique is designed to help you relax, improve your focus, and make you less prone to future stress. It’s called “box” breathing because each part of the breath is held for an equal amount of time – a count of 4. It can help to visualize that you are breathing around a box while you do this exercise.*

### HOW TO DO IT:

- 🌿 Sit or lie down in a comfortable spot.
- 🌿 Inhale through your nose (if possible) for 4 seconds.
- 🌿 Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- 🌿 Exhale through your mouth for 4 seconds.
- 🌿 Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- 🌿 Repeat the inhale-hold-exhale-hold pattern for a total of 4 times, working up to 5 minutes.

## Coherent Breathing

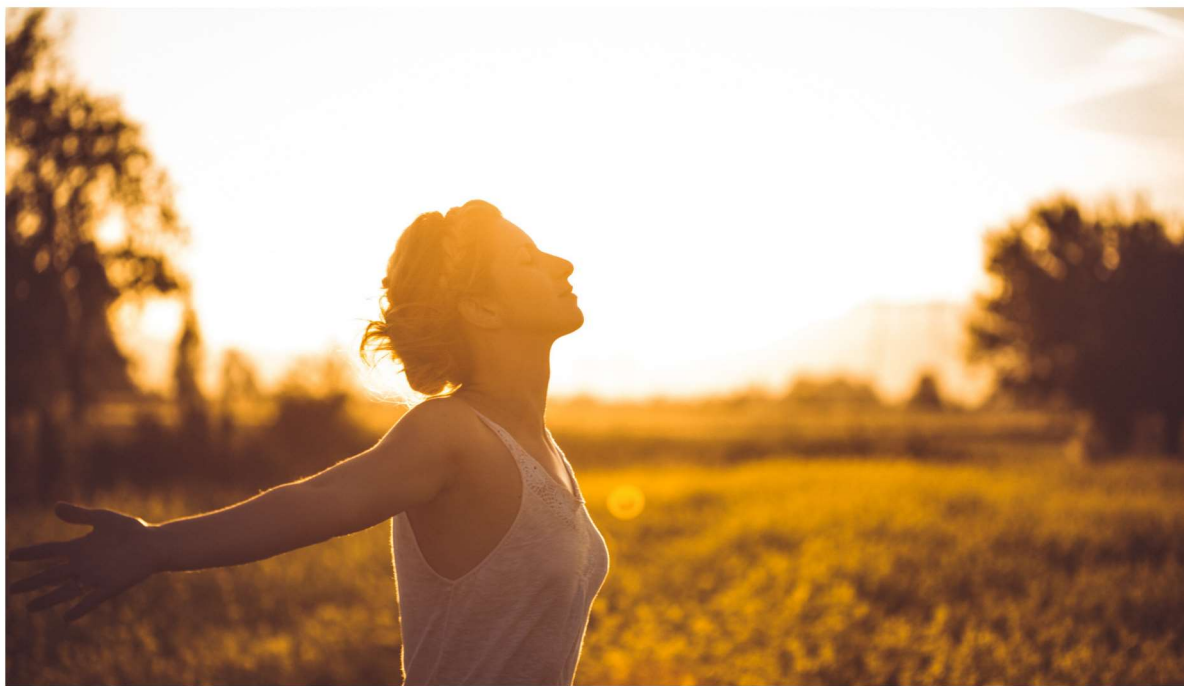
*Great for reducing stress, this is a very simple breathing technique that is linked with less stress and improved heart rate variability (HRV). HRV is the variation in time between each heartbeat. People with higher HRV may be in better cardiovascular shape and also be more resilient to stress. The goal is to slow down your breathing so that you complete 5 full breaths a minute, which boils down to inhaling and exhaling for a count of 5 seconds.*

### HOW TO DO IT:

- 🍃 Inhale for a count of 5.
- 🍃 Exhale for a count of 5.
- 🍃 Repeat for a few minutes (start with 1-2 minutes and work up as you get used to deep breathing).







LESS STRESS.

# Move Life!

We hope the information and exercises in this Mindful Breathing Guide encourage you to take a few minutes of simple self-care time every day. The more you practice, the more your body will thank you!

At Tri Lab Endurance our mission is to help our athletes reach their full potential in all realms of their life.

We'd love to be part of your fitness/wellness journey.

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