

# Breathing Crash course

Using the breath to  
improve your  
well-being

# The importance of the breath

- The breath is closely related to life
- Spirit/Soul in Latin is the same as breath “Spiritus”
- How we feel affects how we breathe
  - When relaxed we take longer and deeper breaths
  - When stressed we take shallow and quick breaths
- **We can use the breath to influence our nervous system**

# What is breathing?

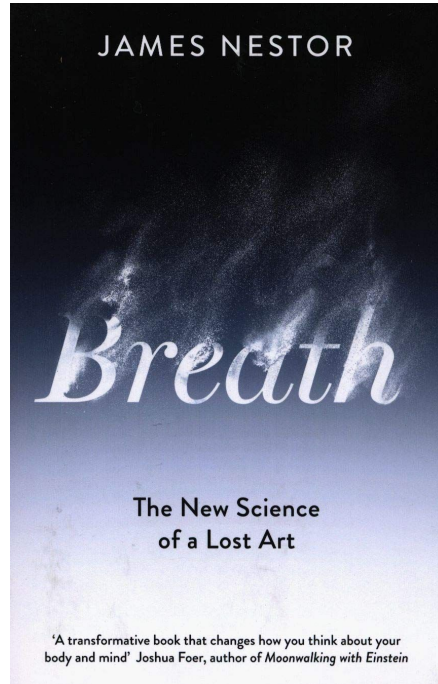
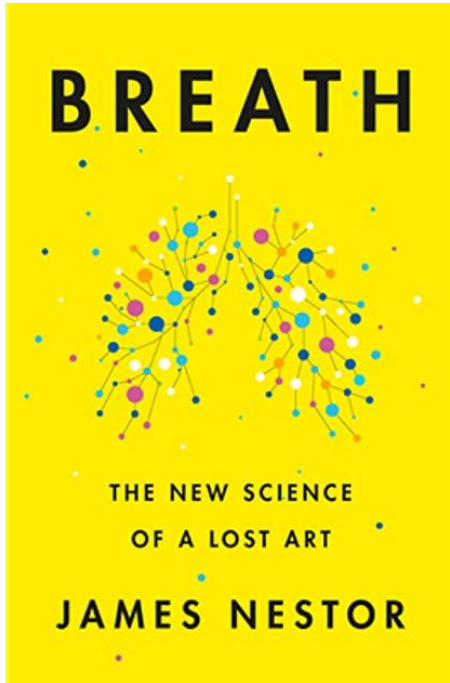
The basic biological function of taking in air, absorbing oxygen, and then exhaling air, releasing carbon dioxide.

# The psychology of Breathing

We can use the breath to:

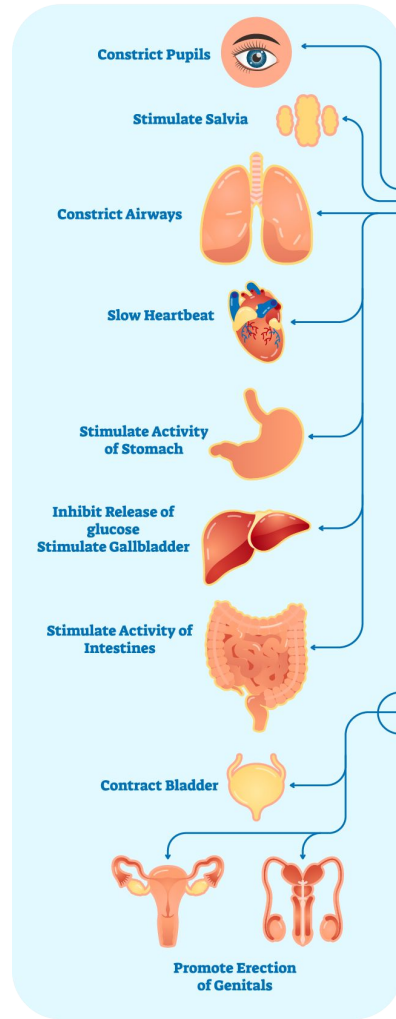
- Control our autonomic nervous system
- Improve our stress response
- Affect our mood and energy levels

# Book Recommendation

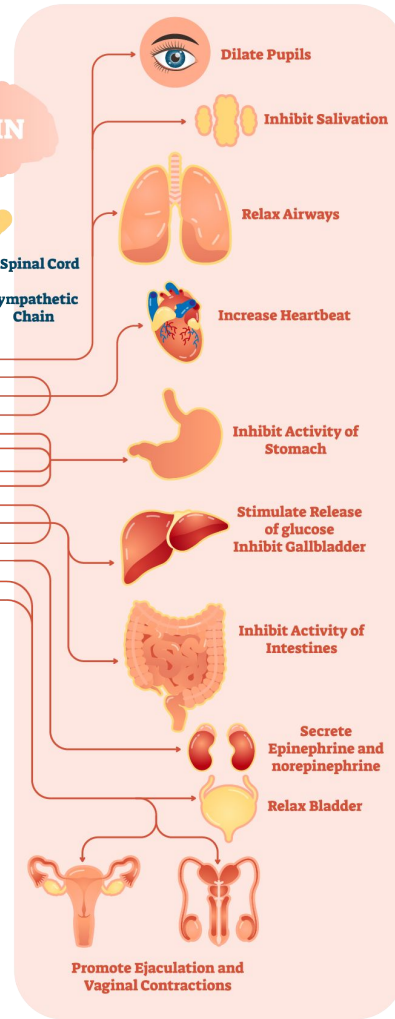


# The autonomic Nervous system

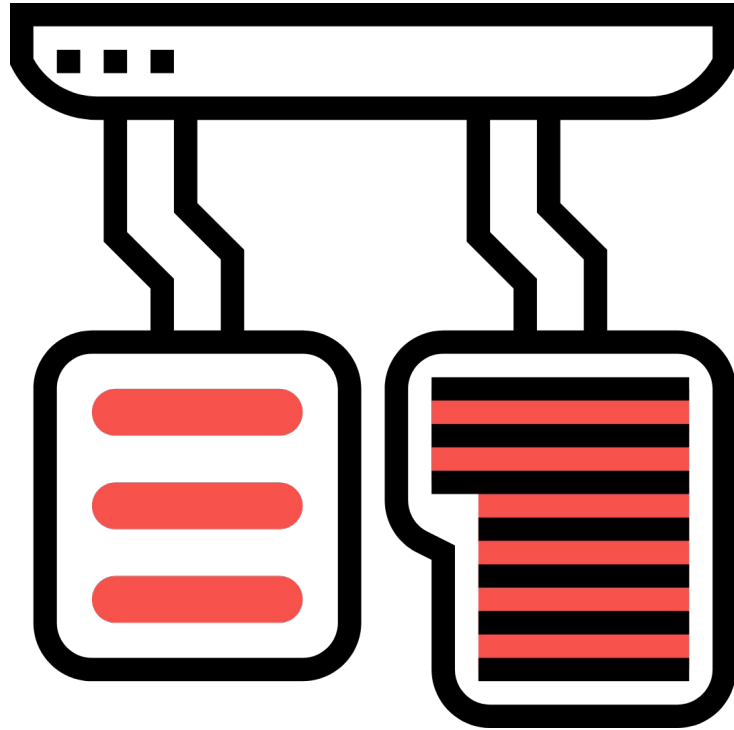
## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVES



## SYMPATHETIC NERVES



# Accelerator vs Brake



# 3 most important techniques



# Caution!



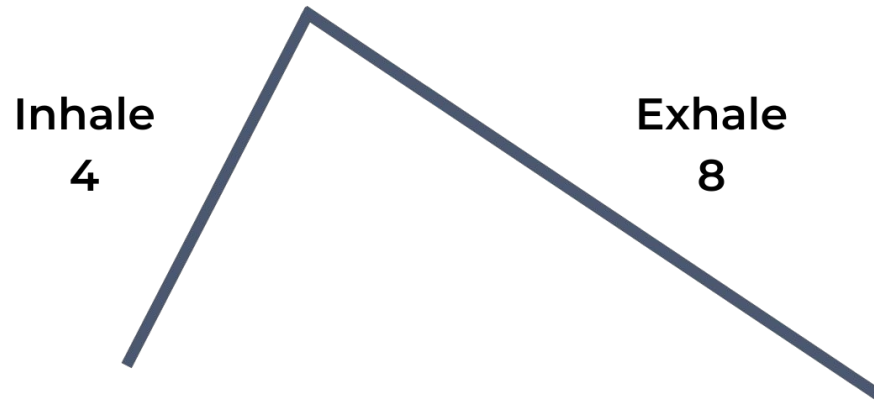
- Don't practice in water or when driving.
- Never force anything.
- Respect your body limits
- If you have a history of panic attacks, practice the energise breath with extra care.

# Calm breathing

# Calm Breathing

- Helps to put us in the rest and digest mode - Parasympathetic branch
- Longer exhales sends a signal that everything is O.K.
- 1:2 ratio (inhale 4 / exhale 8 most common)
- Use the diaphragm
- Up to 3 breaths per minute

# Calm Breathing

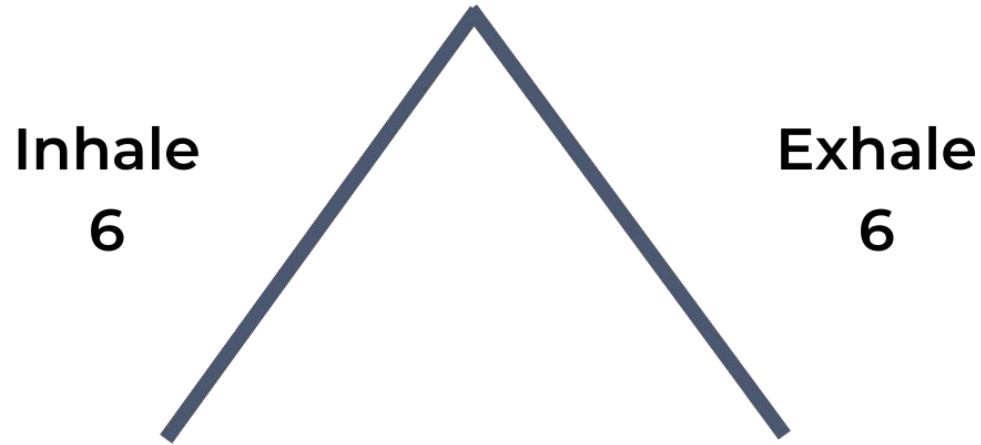


# Balance breathing

# Balance Breathing

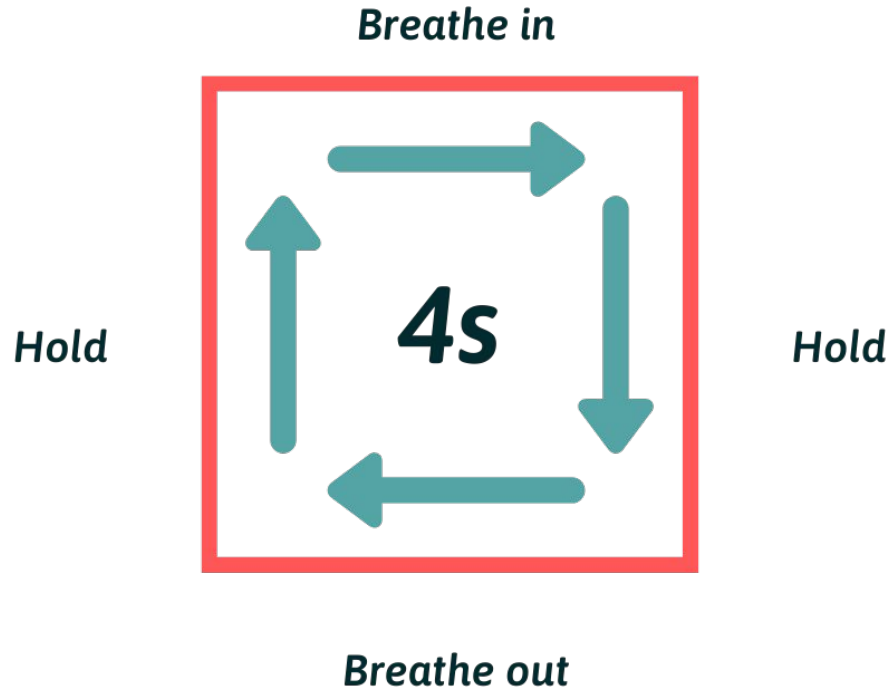
- We usually breathe 8-10 breaths per minute
- In this practice we aim for 50% of “natural rate”
- Approximately 4-6 breaths per minute
- Count to 5-6 to every inhale and exhale
- Diaphragmatic breathing (Belly Breathing)
- Tones your nervous system

# Balance Breathing

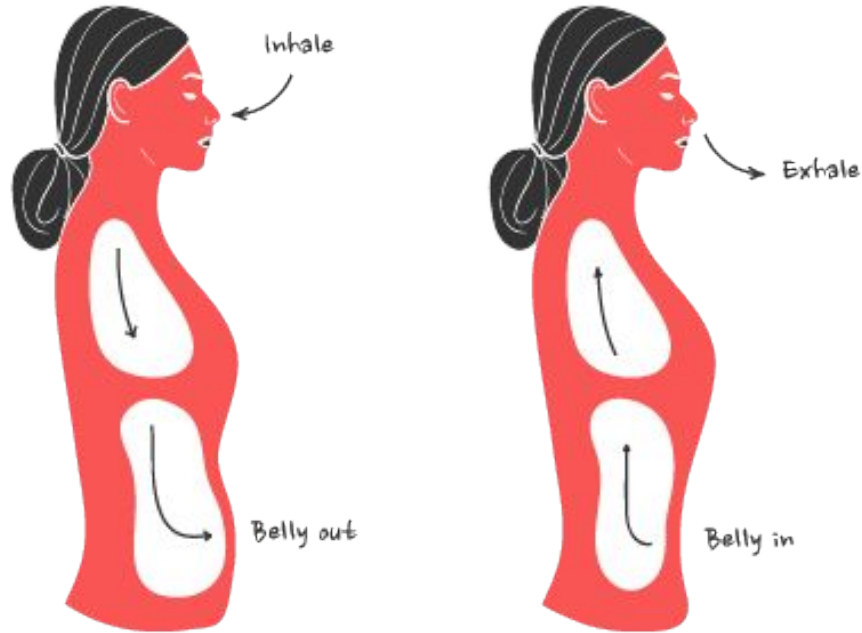




# Variation: Square/Box Breathing



# Diaphragmatic breathing



# Diaphragmatic breathing



Have one hand on your chest and one on your belly.

See if the belly is expanding more than the chest.

# Energising Breathing

# Energise breathing

- More than 30 breaths a minute
- It wakes your body up
- It's a stressor- Good stress is important/Chronic stress isn't
- Activates the sympathetic nervous system
- Channels your energy to one point

# How to do it

- 20-30 rapid breaths
- Empty your lungs and do a breath hold for 30 seconds
- Inhale quickly and do a breath hold for 15 seconds with your lungs full
- Repeat for 2 more rounds

# Caution!

- It's common to feel your fingers and toes tingling
- Your body temperature will rise
- You can feel lightheaded if you do it too intensively
- Always do it while sitting
- If you feel uncomfortable, stop it immediately.

# Bonus



# Need more energy? Use just the right nostril



The right nostril is an accelerator pedal. Circulation speeds up, your body gets hotter, and cortisol levels, blood pressure, and heart rate all increase. It activates the sympathetic nervous system. It will also feed more blood to the opposite hemisphere of the brain, specifically to the prefrontal cortex, which has been associated with logical decisions and language.

# Need to calm down?

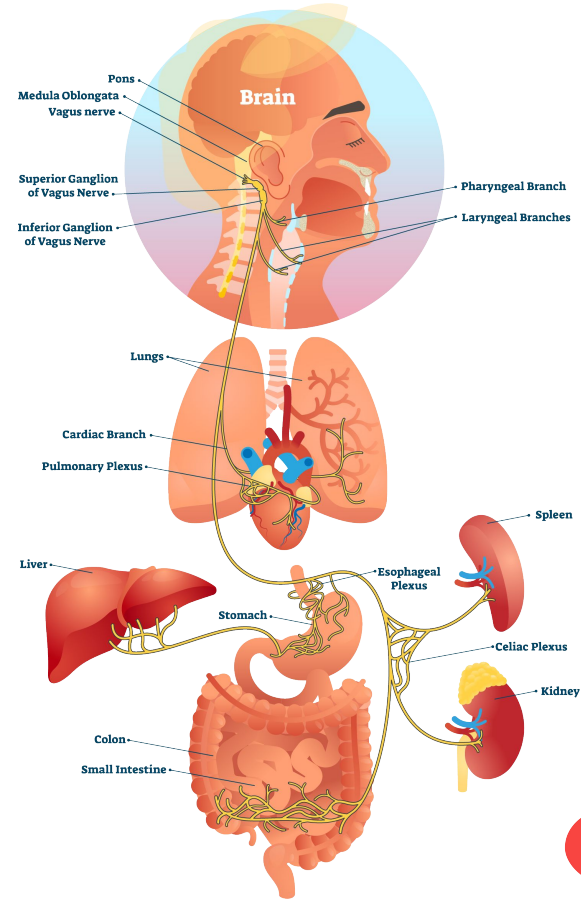
## Use just the left nostril



Inhaling through the left nostril works as brake. The left nostril is more deeply connected to the parasympathetic nervous system, the rest-and-relax side that lowers blood pressure, cools the body, and reduces anxiety. It shifts blood flow to the opposite side of the prefrontal cortex, to the area that influences creative thought.

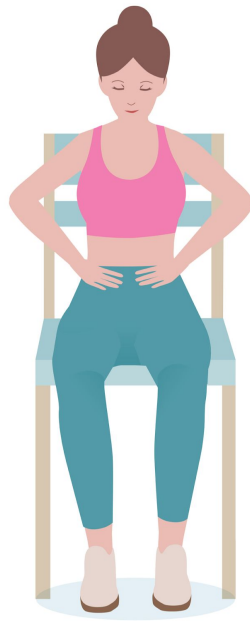
# Vagal Breathing

- The vagus nerve is the longest cranial nerve in the nervous system.
- It's the wanderer or vagabond.
- It's responsible for initiating the body's relaxation response.
- We can stimulate it to evoke the relaxation response.
- It shifts the brain from Beta to Alpha waves. From an aroused state to a calm but alert mode.



# Vagal Breathing

- Take in a full breath and hold it.
- With your lungs full, try to stretch them in a way that feels good.
- You can experiment by moving your shoulders, abdomen and neck to the sides or back and forth.
- See the accompanying video to have a better idea.
- Your blood pressure can drop. Just do it while seated.



With your lungs full gently move back and forwards, left and right until you feel that you're stretching the lungs.

# My suggestion

- Early morning and mid afternoon: Energising
- Whenever possible: Balance
- To calm down and before bed: Calm

# Daily routine

- 15 minutes daily
- 5 minutes morning/midday/evening
- Be mindful of how you're breathing throughout your day