

The Art of Breathing – a Key to Good Health and Happiness

By Caron Goode, Ed.D.

“She no longer needed the pills . . .” Rose was plagued with lifelong allergies, asthma, recurring bronchitis and pneumonia, and healed her symptoms through Full Wave Breathing. There are other success stories using this lifestyle management approach taught by Tom and Caron Goode of the International Breath Institute of Tucson, Arizona.

Henry overcame severe depression and alcoholism. Marilyn conquered her marijuana and cocaine addiction. Heather lost weight and improved her physical appearance and health. Joe kicked his smoking habit, and Leah was able to better manage her fibromyalgia pain.

The results of a breathing technique as documented in the case studies by the International Breath Institute brings up the question of how does Full Wave Breathing affect health, attitude, and lifestyle so as to achieve dynamic results? Why does any breathwork have such a powerful effect on health?

Physical Health

Working with your breathing in specific patterns can lower blood pressure, increase digestion and assimilation, makes the heart patterns more stable, decreases anxiety, remarkably improves depression, and integrates stress. Specifically Full Wave Breathing brings more oxygen to the mind and body than other breathing approaches and triggers the ability to relax and calm oneself.

Breathing is the only body function that you do involuntarily, and that you can voluntarily work with. You can influence your autonomic nervous system and thereby positively influence other systems in your body—circulation, respiration, digestion, and so on. In addition, deeper and more effective breathing increases lymph flow, helping the body to detoxify.

Emotional and Mental Health

Your emotional reactions affect your breathing. Fear accelerates breathing. Anger pumps your breathing like an awakening volcano. Sadness and grief inhibit breathing. Are you a person who sips at life? Or do you get up each morning with a full deep breath and new outlook on life? How you breathe is a predictor for your quality of life and satisfaction. Full Wave Breathing is the single most important exercise for emotional management and integration.

International Breath Institute confirmed that how people breathe affects their attitudes. Deep breathers are more relaxed and balanced. Shallow breathers are more anxious and impulsive. Remember that a resilient child contains impulsivity and regulates emotional responses. Full Wave Breathing is an easy and successful tool to help them develop this capacity!

Research from the International Breath Institute shows that first grade children who sat for long periods of time in their seats, breathed shallower and shallower as the day progressed. Their postures slumped and their eyes glazed. Learning cannot take place under such conditions. But, when their teacher led them through deep breathing exercises for ten minutes each day after lunch, something amazing happened. They felt better! They learned and concentrated more easily. They were relaxed and could shift attention without difficulty after recess. The first graders reminded each other to use their breath before each assignment, and they practiced breathing while walking in the hallway, which helped them not chatter and disturb others.ⁱ

Teens also use this approach to manage stress, addictions, and fears. Allison Howard and Margaret Townsend, trainers for the International Breath Institute, used breathing with at-risk youth. They reported that after the first resistance to something “weird,” this technique was the one the youth remembered when they learned to say no to drugs and yes to life.

The Oxygen Principle

The first step in the breathing process is the inhale. After oxygen enters the lungs, it is picked up by hemoglobin in the blood and sent to all the cells. Once in the cells, oxidation, the method of combining the nutrients from food with oxygen, creates energy.

The following equations clarify the relationship:

Low Oxygen = Low Energy = Fuzzy Mental Focus and Unbalanced Emotions

High Oxygen = High Energy = Clear Mental Focus and Balanced Emotions

Oxygen maintains cells. It keeps them clean and healthy. At the same time, oxygen helps remove waste from the body. Breathing that is more effective increases oxygen in the body. It is the greatest health and energy boost we get, especially if used as a daily exercise program by the entire family. These are some of the latest reasons that successful breathing provides immune support and a health advantage.

- New studies of hospital admissions and emergency department visits have linked exposure to particulate air pollution with increased risk of cardiovascular diseases. As few as two hours after being inhaled, tiny, invisible air pollutants penetrate the lungs' natural defenses and may trigger a heart attack, according to a report in today's *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.ⁱⁱ
- Common air pollutants slow children's lung according to results from the University of Southern California-led Children's Health Study. The 10-year-long study is considered one of the most comprehensive studies to date of the long-term effects of smog on children.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Exposure to two common air pollutants may increase the chance that a pregnant woman births a child with heart defects, according to a UCLA study. It provides the first compelling evidence that air pollution may play a role in causing some birth defects.^{iv}
- When children living under polluted, hazy skies move away to communities with cleaner air, their lungs grow more quickly, according to a study by researchers at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.^v
- ... 'environmental toxins, notably dioxins, have been suggested as contributing factors to a 49 percent increase in diabetes as reported in the 2000 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System published by the Centers for Disease Control.^{vi}

- Today, one in every twenty children develops asthma. This represents about 3.8 million children.^{vii} The evidence from developed countries suggests “that the increase in allergic diseases such as asthma may be associated with air pollution”^{viii}

A Single Foundational Exercise

While we cannot always control the environment, we can control and make as healthy as possible our inner terrain. To use Full Wave Breathing to bring more oxygen into the body and mind can take as little as five minutes a day or maybe thirty minutes day. It depends upon how healthy you already are and how optimal you want to be! It is a foundation exercise to all other exercise programs, and is used first to increase vitality, lung expansion, and circulation. Consider it the warm up exercise. And if you don't work out everyday, you can do Full Wave Breathing everyday for better health.

A Way to Manage Your Lifestyle

The Full Wave Breathing program is more than a breathing technique. It is a way to manage your life from a place of acceptance. What the directors, Drs. Tom and Caron Goode, have learned in the past twenty years of teaching and researching the field of wellness is that all people must come to a place of acceptance within themselves. Acceptance means achieving a calm and peaceful place in the heart center, which radiates the peace throughout the body, mind and spirit. It really doesn't matter whether one is facing an illness, preparing for a bicycle race, leaving home for college, or dealing with life transitions.

- ⁱ Goode, Caron, Ed.D. Research article from the International Breath Institute posted at www.InternationalBreathInstitute.com
- ⁱⁱ “tiny Air Pollutants Linked to Heart attack, (6-21-2001) posted by the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org. Also found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2001/06/01061265427.htm>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Study Shows Air Pollution Slows Lung Function Growth in Children.” News release issued by NIH-National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Information about the study is found at the researcher’s website: <http://www.esc.edu/medicine/scehsc> or <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2000/10/001022202125.htm>.
- ^{iv} “Urban Air Pollution Linked to Birth defects for the First Time; Research Links Two Pollutants to Increased Risk of Heart Defect,” University of California-Los Angeles (<http://www.ucla.edu/>) posted on 1-2-2002 at Science Daily (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2002/01/020102075340/htm>)
- ^v “Lungs Develop Better In Kids Who Move Away From Pollution.” University of Southern California(<http://www.usc.edu/>) posted on 12-17-2001 at science daily (<http://sciencedaily.com/releases/2002/01/020102075340.htm>)
- ^{vi} “Strong Statistical Correlation Between Prevalence of Diabetes and air Pollution.” Source: University of Buffalo (<http://buffalo.edu>). Posted on 7-31-2002 at Science Daily <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2002/07/020731080856.htm>
- ^{vii} “New Estimates for Asthma Tracked,” a news release and fact sheet from the Center for Disease Control, released on 10-5-2001 at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/re:ases/01facts/asthma.htm>.
- ^{viii} Department of Health Advisory Group on the Medical Aspects of Air Pollution Episodes. “First Report-Ozone.” London: HMSO, 1991 (partial abstract at <http://www.healthy.net/library/search/medline.htm>)