

What the \$%@# is this breathwork?

At its core, it's a continuous, connected breathing pattern:

- No pause between inhale and exhale
- Usually done through the mouth
- Full, deep breaths into the belly and chest
- Rhythmic and sustained over time (15–45+ minutes)

This style of breathing intentionally alters your blood chemistry and nervous system state.

◆ Step-by-Step: How to Do It Properly

1. Set Up Your Environment

- Lie down (recommended for beginners)
 - Quiet, safe space
 - Loosen tight clothing
 - Optional: music (helps rhythm)
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2. Body Position

- On your back
- Knees bent or legs straight
- Hands relaxed (not clenched)

Key point: Your body should feel safe—this is not a performance.

3. The Breath Pattern

This is the core:

- Inhale deeply through the mouth
- Let the exhale fall out naturally (don't force it)
- Immediately begin the next inhale (no pause)

Think:

👉 “In... and out... in... and out...” (like a wave)

4. Where to Breathe Into

You want a 3-part breath:

1. Belly expands
2. Rib cage expands
3. Chest lifts

Most people mess this up by:

- Only breathing into chest (shallow)
 - Or forcing belly only (incomplete)
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5. Stay Relaxed While Breathing Deeply

This is the paradox:

- Breath is active
- Body stays relaxed

Watch for:

- Jaw clenching
- Tight shoulders
- Furrowed brow

If you see those → you're forcing it.

6. Duration

- Beginners: 10–15 minutes
- Intermediate: 20–30 minutes
- Advanced: 45+ minutes

Then:

- Rest quietly for 5–10 minutes afterward

Integration is where a lot of the benefit happens.



What's Happening in Your Body (Science)

This is where it gets real.

1. Oxygen–Carbon Dioxide Shift

Rapid, deep breathing lowers CO₂ in your blood (called hypocapnia).

This causes:

- Blood vessels to constrict
- Oxygen to release differently to tissues (Bohr effect)
- Tingling in hands/face
- Lightheadedness

👉 This is why you feel altered

2. Nervous System Activation

You're stimulating both:

- Sympathetic system (activation, alertness)

- Then often a rebound into parasympathetic (deep calm)

This creates:

- Emotional release
 - Stress discharge
 - Deep relaxation afterward
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3. Limbic System + Emotional Processing

Breathwork can activate the limbic system (emotion + memory center).

That's why people experience:

- Old memories
- Emotional releases
- Unexpected feelings

This isn't random—it's stored stress surfacing.

4. Brainwave Changes

Extended rhythmic breathing can shift you toward:

- Theta brainwaves (meditative, subconscious access)

This is similar to:

- Deep meditation
 - Hypnosis states
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◆ **Benefits (When Done Correctly)**

Physical

- Increased oxygen efficiency
- Improved lung capacity
- Reduced muscle tension

Mental

- Reduced anxiety
- Increased clarity
- Better stress regulation

Emotional

- Release of suppressed emotions
- Trauma processing support
- Feeling “lighter” or reset

Performance

- Better focus
 - Faster recovery from stress
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Common Mistakes (This is where people go wrong)

1. Over-Breathing (Too Aggressive)

- Breathing too fast or forcefully
- Leads to dizziness, panic, or cramps

Fix: Slow it down. Smooth, not frantic.

2. Holding Tension

People often:

- Clench hands
- Tighten jaw
- Brace their body

This blocks the process.

Fix: Keep the body soft.

3. Forcing Emotional Breakthroughs

Trying to “make something happen”:

- Leads to frustration
- Or emotional overwhelm

Fix: Let whatever happens, happen.

4. Shallow Chest Breathing

This is the most common issue.

It causes:

- Anxiety
- Ineffective oxygen exchange

Fix: Expand belly → ribs → chest.

5. Not Integrating After

Jumping up right after:

- Cuts off the benefits

Fix: Always rest afterward.

Potential Side Effects (Normal vs Problematic)

Normal Experiences

- Tingling in hands/face
 - Lightheadedness
 - Emotional waves
 - Muscle twitching
 - Yawning or release
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Less Ideal (Usually from improper technique)

- Hyperventilation panic
 - Strong dizziness
 - Hand cramping (tetany)
 - Anxiety spike
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Who Should Be Careful or Avoid It

People with:

- Cardiovascular issues

- Severe anxiety/panic disorders
- Epilepsy
- Pregnancy (without guidance)

This isn't fear-based—it's just physiology.

◆ The Real Skill Most People Miss

It's not about breathing harder.

It's about:

👉 Breathing deeply while staying relaxed and present

That combination is what creates transformation.

Ok, I'm getting it, but can you explain that "crab hand feeling." What Is Tetany?

Tetany is a condition where muscles involuntarily contract or spasm, often in the:

- Hands (they curl inward—"claw hands")
- Feet
- Face or jaw

During breathwork, it can feel like:

- Fingers locking up
- Tingling turning into tightness
- Loss of control in hands

It can look intense—but in most breathwork contexts, it's temporary and not dangerous.

Why Tetany Happens (The Real Science)

Tetany during breathwork is caused by a chain reaction:

1. Over-Breathing → Low CO₂ (Hypocapnia)

When you breathe rapidly or deeply for a long time:

- You blow off too much carbon dioxide (CO₂)

This is key:

👉 CO₂ is not just waste—it regulates your blood chemistry.

2. Blood Becomes More Alkaline

Lower CO₂ → increases blood pH

This is called respiratory alkalosis

3. Calcium Availability Drops

This is the critical step most people don't know:

- Alkaline blood causes calcium to bind to proteins
- This reduces free calcium in your bloodstream

👉 Free calcium is needed for proper muscle function

4. Nerves Become Over-Excitable

Low free calcium → nerves fire more easily

This leads to:

- Muscle contractions
- Spasms
- Tingling → tightening → clamping

That's tetany.

◆ What It Feels Like (Progression)

Most people experience it in stages:

1. Tingling (hands, lips, face)
2. Buzzing or vibrating sensation
3. Tightness in fingers

4. Hands curl inward (classic tetany)
 5. Possible forearm or foot involvement
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◆ Is It Dangerous?

For healthy individuals, in a controlled breathwork setting:

👉 Usually not dangerous, just uncomfortable or intense

But—and this matters—

it means you're pushing your breathing too far or too fast.

◆ Why It Happens More in Breathwork

Tetany shows up when people:

- Breathe too fast
- Breathe too forcefully
- Stay in that state too long
- Add emotional intensity on top

It's common in:

- Transformational breathwork
- Holotropic-style breathing

- Wim Hof–type breathing (if overdone)
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◆ **Common Mistake: Thinking It’s “Good”**

Some people believe:

“If my hands lock up, I’m doing it right.”

That’s not accurate.

Tetany is:

- A sign of strong physiological shift
- Not a requirement for transformation

You can get all the benefits without it.

◆ **How to Prevent Tetany**

1. Slow Down Your Breath

- Make it rhythmic, not aggressive
 - Think “smooth wave,” not “forceful pumping”
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2. Don’t Over-Inhale

- More air ≠ better results
 - Overfilling lungs accelerates CO₂ loss
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3. Stay Relaxed

Tension makes it worse:

- Relax hands
 - Unclench jaw
 - Soften shoulders
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4. Take Breaks If Needed

You can:

- Pause briefly
 - Return to nasal breathing
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◆ How to Stop Tetany If It Starts

If your hands start locking:

Do this immediately:

- Slow your breathing

- Switch to nose breathing
- Or hold your breath briefly (raises CO₂)

You can also:

- Gently shake out your hands
- Bring awareness back to your body

Within a few minutes, it usually resolves.

◆ **The Deeper Insight**

Tetany is basically your body saying:

“Your chemistry is out of balance right now.”

It's not failure—but it's feedback.

Skilled breathwork is about:

- Control
 - Awareness
 - Not pushing yourself into extremes
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◆ **Bottom Line**

- WTetany = muscle spasms from low CO₂ and calcium imbalance
- Common in over-intense breathwork
- Not usually dangerous, but not necessary
- Preventable with better pacing and relaxation
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5. After the Session

- Rest and integrate: Spend 5–10 minutes quietly afterward.
- Hydrate: Drinking water helps stabilize blood chemistry.
- Journal if desired: Writing about sensations, emotions, or insights can enhance the experience.
- Don't plan stressful activities immediately—give the nervous system a chance to settle.

◆ Benefits

- Physiological: Increased oxygenation, better lung capacity, improved circulation.
- Mental: Reduced anxiety, clarity, focus, stress regulation.
- Emotional: Release of stored tension, trauma processing, deeper self-awareness.
- Energetic: Feeling “lighter,” more present, and in touch with their body.

Ok, I have more questions...what is all that weird yelling and tapping and moving?

These are TOOLS to help move energy that gets built up in the session to help make the session smoother. More specifically...

Toning (Vocalizing Sounds)

What it is:

- Making a vocal sound (like “ahhh,” “ohhh,” “mmm”) during the exhale.
- Can be sustained, vibrated, or modulated in tone.

Purpose in breathwork:

- Releases tension in the body and throat.
- Shifts energy—the vibration can “unstick” blocked emotional energy.
- Calms the nervous system when done consciously and gently.

How to practice:

- Exhale naturally and allow a sound to come from your throat or chest.
- Keep it soft and continuous—no straining.
- Can be used on every exhale or only when a sensation or tension arises.

Student Notes:

- Toning can feel strange at first—reassure that it's normal.
 - Avoid forcing sounds; let them emerge naturally.
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Tapping (Physical Stimulation)

What it is:

- Gently tapping parts of the body (usually chest, ribs, or sternum) in rhythm with the breath.
- Sometimes called “self-massage” or “chest percussion.”

Purpose in breathwork:

- Helps release stagnant energy in the body.
- Stimulates blood flow and lymphatic circulation.
- Supports deeper emotional release through physical activation.

How to practice:

- Use fingertips to gently tap along the sternum, ribs, or collarbone.
- Coordinate with inhale or exhale, depending on guidance.
- Avoid forceful tapping—gentle is most effective.

Student Notes:

- Tapping often releases tension from the chest and heart area.
 - Some may feel emotional sensations—this is part of the release process.
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Breath Holds (Retention / Suspension)

What it is:

- Briefly holding the breath after inhaling (full inhale retention) or after exhaling (empty lung retention).

Purpose in breathwork:

- Increases CO₂ tolerance and oxygen efficiency.
- Creates a shift in nervous system state, often allowing deeper awareness or clarity.
- Supports energy movement in the body and subtle energetic experiences.

How to practice safely:

- Only hold for a comfortable duration.
- Use natural breath retention, never forcing it.
- Combine with relaxation cues—hands, jaw, shoulders soft.
- Can be guided for 10–30 seconds max for beginners; longer for experienced practitioners under supervision.

Student Notes:

- Breath holds can feel intense at first—remind them to stay relaxed.
 - If tingling, lightheadedness, or tetany occurs, resume gentle, rhythmic breathing immediately.
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Integration of These Tools in a Session

- Toning: Often done during exhale in build or peak phase to help release tension.
- Tapping: Can be applied at emotional release points—helps the body “wake up” and circulate energy.
- Breath Holds: Typically introduced mid-session or at peak, always with clear guidance and safety cues.

Key Principle:

All three are enhancements, not requirements. They are tools to support deeper transformation, but safety, relaxation, and awareness are always the priority.

Are there other tools? Totally. These aren't often done in class but you may see them taught or can even do them yourself...

Eye Movements

What it is:

- Slow or intentional movements of the eyes during breathing.

Purpose:

- Helps release stored tension or trauma in the nervous system.
- Can bring awareness to visual/energetic blocks.

Practice Tip:

- Gently roll the eyes or focus on a soft point while breathing.
 - Can be combined with toning or gentle tapping.
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Affirmations / Intentions

What it is:

- Short statements spoken internally or softly aloud, e.g., “I am safe,” “I release tension.”

Purpose:

- Guides mental and emotional focus.
- Helps anchor intentions and integrate the session experience.

Practice Tip:

- Set an intention at the start of the session.
 - Repeat silently or with breath-linked toning throughout.
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Movement / Gentle Stretching

What it is:

- Small, guided movements of the arms, shoulders, or torso during breath.

Purpose:

- Releases physical tension patterns.
- Enhances oxygenation in muscles and tissues.

Practice Tip:

- Use micro-movements rather than large motions.
 - Often integrated during exhale or release points.
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Body Scanning / Awareness

What it is:

- Guiding attention slowly through the body to notice sensations.

Purpose:

- Helps detect tension or emotional blockages.
- Strengthens mind-body connection and presence.

Practice Tip:

- Scan from toes → head or head → toes.
- Combine with breath, toning, or tapping for deeper integration.

Energy Visualization

What it is:

- Imagining energy moving through the body with the breath (often along chakras or meridians).

Purpose:

- Supports energetic alignment and emotional release.
- Can enhance the feeling of lightness, openness, or clarity.

Practice Tip:

- Visualize a “wave of light” or “flowing energy” following each inhale/exhale.
- Keep it gentle; it’s a focus tool, not a forced visualization.

Sound / Music Support

What it is:

- Using music, drumming, or other ambient sound to guide rhythm and emotion.

Purpose:

- Supports flow, pacing, and emotional resonance.
- Encourages participants to relax into the rhythm of the breath.

Practice Tip:

- Choose tracks without lyrics for safety and focus.
- Volume should be lower than facilitator's voice if leading live.

Grounding / Integration Tools

What it is:

- Techniques at the end of a session to settle the body and nervous system:
 - Feeling feet on the floor
 - Gentle rocking

- Hands on heart or belly

Purpose:

- Anchors the experience physically and emotionally.
- Helps the body transition safely out of high-intensity states.

SO one more question, what in the \$%# am I breathing through the mouth?

Breath, the mouth is used intentionally rather than the nose, and there's a very specific physiological and energetic reason behind it. Here's a detailed explanation:

Physiological Reason: Volume & Depth

- Breathing through the mouth allows for larger volumes of air per breath compared to nasal breathing.
- The goal is full expansion of the lungs, filling lower, middle, and upper lobes.
- Connected, circular, mouth breathing creates continuous oxygen flow, which can:
 - Increase oxygenation in tissues
 - Expand lung capacity
 - Facilitate deeper detoxification of CO₂

Nose breathing is more restrictive. Mouth breathing allows uninterrupted, connected, wave-like breathing, which is central to Transformational Breath.

Nervous System Activation

- Mouth breathing naturally engages the sympathetic and parasympathetic balance differently than nasal breathing.
 - The continuous exhale through the mouth:
 - Supports release of tension
 - Helps the body enter a state of deep relaxation paired with alertness
 - It's especially effective during emotional release and peak phases because it allows the body to move energy freely without resistance.
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Connection to Toning and Expression

- The mouth is also used for toning and sound.
- Open-mouth exhaling supports:
 - Vibrational release (toning)
 - Physical expression of stored emotion
 - Greater engagement of the diaphragm

Nasal breathing doesn't allow the same vocal resonance, so energy release is limited.

Circular / Connected Breath Pattern

- Transformational Breath emphasizes connected, circular breathing—inhale into chest, ribs, and belly → exhale without pause.
- Mouth breathing reduces resistance, allowing the cycle to flow without interruptions that nasal passages might create.
- This continuous flow is what allows for deep energy release, emotional clearing, and integration.

Safety Note

- Mouth breathing increases CO₂ exhalation, so there is more risk of lightheadedness or tetany.
 - That's why gradual progression, monitoring, and guidance are critical, especially for beginners.
 - Facilitators often combine relaxed mouth breathing with body scanning and gentle coaching to maintain safety.
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**You may be thinking isn't mouth breathing wrong?
Here's the distinction—mouth breathing in
everyday life is different from intentional mouth
breathing in breathwork.**

Here's the breakdown:



1. Mouth Breathing vs. Nose Breathing

Mouth breathing (general daily habit):

- Often occurs unconsciously, e.g., due to congestion, stress, or poor posture.
- Can lead to:
 - Dry mouth and throat
 - Less filtration of dust/bacteria (nose filters better)
 - Lower nitric oxide production (affects circulation and immune function)
 - Less diaphragm engagement → shallow chest breathing

Nose breathing (ideal for daily life):

- Warms, humidifies, and filters air
- Supports diaphragmatic breathing
- Produces nitric oxide, which improves oxygen absorption and circulation

- Promotes parasympathetic (“rest and digest”) nervous system activity

Bottom line: For most of the day, nose breathing is healthier.



2. When Mouth Breathing Is Useful

Intentional, controlled mouth breathing like in Transformational Breath is different:

- Purposeful, connected, deep, and controlled
- Temporary, done in short sessions with guidance
- Supports:
 - Deep lung expansion
 - Emotional and energetic release
 - Vocalization and toning

Think of it like exercise for your breath—you wouldn’t run 10 miles every day, but doing it intentionally in a session is beneficial.



3. Risks of Chronic Mouth Breathing

If someone habitually breathes through the mouth all day:

- May develop postural issues, dental problems, or sleep problems (snoring, sleep apnea)
 - Can lead to shallow, chest-only breathing, which reduces oxygen efficiency
 - Can increase stress and anxiety, as nasal breathing naturally engages the parasympathetic nervous system
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4. Practical Guidance

- Daily life: Nose is preferred. Focus on slow, diaphragmatic nasal breathing.
 - Breathwork sessions: Mouth breathing is fine and intentional, but should always be guided, gradual, and paired with safety cues.
 - Switching safely: Encourage students to transition back to normal nose breathing after a session to stabilize CO₂ levels and the nervous system.
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Summary:

Mouth breathing isn't "bad" if done intentionally and temporarily (like in Transformational Breath). But for everyday life, nose breathing is healthier and more efficient. Mouth breathing should be used as a tool, not a habit.

◆ Last, questions: why does the teacher sometimes say affirmations during the breathing?

1. Breathwork Opens the Subconscious

During Transformational Breath:

- You shift brain activity toward theta states (like deep meditation or hypnosis)
- The critical thinking mind quiets down
- The subconscious becomes more accessible

👉 This is key:

Affirmations land deeper during breathwork than in normal waking state

So instead of just thinking:

“I am calm”

Your system actually starts to feel and encode it



2. Breath + Emotion = Reprogramming

Affirmations alone are weak if they're just words.

But in breathwork:

- Emotions are activated
- The body is engaged
- The nervous system is shifting

This creates:

👉 State-dependent learning

Meaning:

The brain rewires based on what you feel while you say something

So if someone breathes deeply and feels release while saying:

“I let go”

It becomes much more real neurologically.



3. Interrupting Old Patterns

Most people are running unconscious loops like:

- “I’m not safe”
- “I’m not enough”
- “I can’t relax”

Breathwork brings those patterns closer to the surface.

Affirmations:

👉 Interrupt and replace those loops in real time

Instead of:

Fear rising → reinforcing fear

You get:

Fear rising → “I am safe” → nervous system begins to shift



4. Directing the Experience

Without guidance, breathwork can feel random.

Affirmations act like:

👉 A steering wheel for the experience

They help guide:

- Emotional release
- Focus
- Intention

Example:

- “I allow myself to feel” → opens emotional flow
 - “I am grounded” → stabilizes someone getting overwhelmed
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5. Nervous System Regulation

Certain affirmations directly calm the body:

- “I am safe”
- “I can relax”
- “I am supported”

These work because:

- The brain is constantly scanning for safety (threat detection)
- Affirmations paired with breath signal:
 - 👉 “You’re okay now”

Over time, this can retrain baseline stress levels



6. Embodiment (This is the Real Goal)

The goal isn't to repeat affirmations.

It's to:

👉 feel them in the body

That's why you'll say:

- On inhale: receive
- On exhale: affirm

Example:

Inhale → expand chest

Exhale → "I am open"

Now it's not mental—it's physical.



7. When Affirmations DON'T Work

This is important.

They backfire when:

- They feel fake ("I am wealthy" when someone feels broke and stressed)
- They're too complex
- They're overused

👉 Fix:

Use simple, believable, body-based phrases

Better:

- “I can soften”
 - “I am okay right now”
 - “I allow this”
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Best Types of Affirmations for Breathwork

Use ones that are:

◆ Present-focused

- “I am safe”
- “I am here”

◆ Permission-based

- “I allow”
- “I let go”

◆ Body-based

- “I soften”
- “I relax”

◆ **Non-forceful**

Avoid:

✗ “I am perfect”

Use:

✓ “I accept myself”



How to Use Them in a Session

- Repeat slowly (not rapid-fire)
 - Sync with breath (usually exhale)
 - Leave space between repetitions
 - Let students feel, not just think
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Simple Example

“Inhale...”

Exhale... I am safe...”

(Pause)

“Inhale...

Exhale... I can let go...”



Bottom Line

Affirmations work in Transformational Breathwork because the breath puts the brain and body into a state where new beliefs can actually be felt, not just thought.

They:

- Rewire patterns
- Regulate the nervous system
- Guide emotional release
- Help people embody new states