

## The magic of breath work

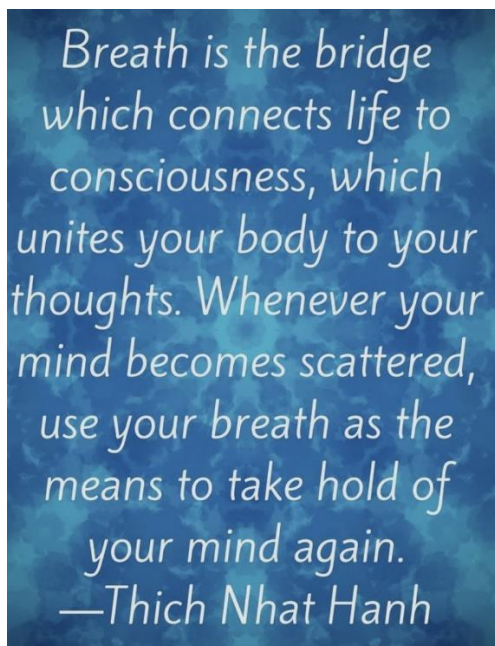
Breathing is a necessity of life that usually occurs without much thought. When you breathe in air, blood cells receive oxygen and release carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is a waste product that's carried back through the body and exhaled.

Improper breathing can upset the oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange and contribute to anxiety, panic attacks, fatigue, and other physical and emotional problems.

When people are anxious, they tend to take rapid, shallow breaths that come directly from the chest. This causes an upset in the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels which increases heart rate, dizziness, muscle tension and other physical sensations which signal a stress response that can contribute to anxiety and panic attacks.

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body and avoid the 'fight or flight' response as it helps to regulate heartbeat, blood flow, breathing and digestion.

Take time out to practice these simple breathing exercises so that you are familiar with them and can use them when you start to feel overwhelmed or anxious and they will help you to feel more grounded and in control.



## 5 FINGER BREATHING

Slowly trace your left hand with your right finger, starting where your hand and wrist meet. As you trace each finger breathe in as your finger climbs up and breathe out as your finger slides down, then switch hands.



## BALLOON BREATHING

Imagine your belly is like a balloon.

Breathing in, notice how the balloon gets bigger as it inflates. Breathing out, notice how the balloon gets smaller as it deflates.



# DANDELION BREATH

With your hand in front of you, imagine holding a delicate, fluffy dandelion. Breathing in, fill your belly with air. Breathing out, pretending you are slowly blowing the dandelion as the seeds fall, floating away in the sky.

