

7.2 Breathing techniques

Breath is life. It is the first act we perform upon birth and the last upon death. It is the essential energy that animates all living beings. Yet, in between, many of us overlook its power—not just for survival, but for healing. Across cultures and centuries, breathing techniques have been revered as gateways to physical vitality, emotional balance, and spiritual awakening. For energy healers, it is not only a physiological function but a sacred tool—one that can regulate the nervous system, shift consciousness, and move subtle energy.

For the energy healer, the application of breathing techniques is twofold: it is a tool for the practitioner's own centring and empowerment, and a direct intervention for the client. A healer who is not grounded and clear may struggle to be an effective conduit. Conversely, a client who is stressed, anxious, and mentally scattered presents a "noisy" or resistant energy field, making it difficult for healing energy to integrate. Conscious breathing elegantly addresses both challenges, creating a resonant field where deep healing can occur.

Back in the 1950-60s, internationally renowned spiritual healer Harry Edwards, recognised the importance of breathing for both the healer and the client:

“In India and the Far East, those who possess the healing gifts, and who seek closer attunement with the higher source of thought, spend much time in the practice of breathing, and this is one of the principal attributes sought by those who practice Yogi. We live in a "sea" of cosmic energies and, day by day, we unconsciously absorb these forces into our systems. It is the vital energy that the magnetic healer has in abundance which gives him radiant health and allows him to direct his flow of strength to a patient in need. ...

People are able to take in vitality from trees and certain shrubs by consciously drawing this strength into themselves by breathing deeply with the intent of doing so. ... Every patient who comes to the Sanctuary at Shere is given this information and they are urged to practise characterised breathing in through the nostrils in gentle but full inhalations, feeling, as they: do this, that they are drawing into themselves cosmic energies giving a sense of exhilaration, vitality and power. The exhalation should also be slow and purposeful, accompanied by the inner feeling that waste matter is being dispelled.”¹

While we are not going to teach our clients breathwork techniques, we can use them to help settle our clients and improve our own capacity to channel energy.

¹ Harry Edwards, *The Power of Spiritual Healing*, London, Herbert Jenkins Ltd, 1963, pp.99-101

7.2.1 *The breath-energy connection*

Breath is more than oxygen exchange—it is a carrier of life force. In many traditions, this life force is known by different names:

- **Prana** in Indian yogic philosophy
- **Qi (Chi)** in Chinese medicine
- **Ruach** in Hebrew mysticism
- **Pneuma** in ancient Greek philosophy.

These concepts all point to breath as a conduit of vital energy. Breathwork, therefore, is not merely a physical exercise but a spiritual practice that influences the flow of energy within and around the body^{2 3}.

7.2.2 *Breathwork in ancient traditions*

- **Pranayama (India)** *Pranayama* is the yogic science of breath control. Yogic science details five types of Prana (*Vayus*), with *Prana Vayu* (governed by the inhalation) being responsible for receiving energy into the body, and *Apana Vayu* (governed by the exhalation) responsible for elimination and release⁴. Conscious breathing is therefore a process of actively drawing in fresh, vital Prana and expelling used-up, stagnant energy (*ama* in Ayurveda). The breath is also said to purify and energize the *Nadis* (energy channels) in the yogic system, particularly the *Ida* (lunar), *Pingala* (solar), and *Sushumna* (central) nadis. Balanced breathing balances these flows, leading to mental clarity and energetic equilibrium⁵. Techniques like *Nadi Shodhana* (alternate nostril breathing) are designed to balance the energy channels (*nadis*) and harmonize the body and mind.
- **Qigong and Tai Chi (China)** In Traditional Chinese Medicine, breathwork (*Qigong*) is used to move Qi through the meridian system, removing blockages and nourishing organs. Qigong and Tai Chi incorporate breath with movement to cultivate and circulate Qi, the vital energy. Breath is synchronized with posture and intention to clear blockages and enhance vitality.

² Nancy Hausauer, “Using Healing Breath To Heal And Uplift Your Energy: 9 Techniques for Self-Care Plus 5 Ways To Use Breath With Clients”, The Energy Healing Site, Extracted 26/8/2025 from www.the-energy-healing-site.com/healing-breath.html

³ Aletheia Luna (2023) “Breathwork: 11 Magical Techniques For Spiritual Healing” from www.lonerwolf.com/breathwork/

⁴ Sovik, R. (2005) “The Science of Breathing – The Yogic View” *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, No. 15 (1) <https://doi.org/10.17761/ijyt.15.141616117n2276j83>.

⁵ Sovik (2005), as above

- **Shamanic breathwork** Indigenous traditions use breath in rituals to access altered states of consciousness, release trauma, and connect with spirit guides. Breath becomes a vehicle for soul-level healing.

7.2.3 Modern breathwork modalities

Contemporary breathwork has evolved into various schools and techniques, each with unique applications in energy healing:

Technique	Description	Energy Healing Benefits
Holotropic Breathwork	Developed by Stanislav Grof; uses rapid breathing and evocative music	Facilitates emotional release and spiritual insight
Wim Hof Method	Combines breath retention with cold exposure	Boosts immunity, increases energy, and enhances resilience
Transformational Breath®	Integrates conscious breathing with affirmations and movement	Clears emotional blocks and energizes the body
Rebirthing Breathwork	Uses connected breathing to revisit and heal birth trauma	Releases subconscious patterns and restores energy flow

These techniques are often used in therapeutic settings to help clients access deeper layers of consciousness and energy.⁶

A relatively new technique is **the coherent heart**. Research from the HeartMath Institute demonstrates that focused breathing techniques, often combined with heart-focused positive emotion, can create a state of "heart coherence." This is a smooth, ordered pattern in the heart's rhythms that synchronizes with the rhythms of the respiratory and circulatory systems⁷. This physiological coherence is believed to generate a strong, coherent electromagnetic field around the heart, which can be measured several feet from the body. For an energy healer, cultivating personal heart coherence through breath can significantly amplify the strength and stability of the energy they are projecting, potentially entraining (synchronising) the client's own biofield into a more coherent state.

There are other modern energy healing modalities that also incorporate breathwork into their work:

- **Reiki** While Reiki is often passive, a Reiki practitioner can use their own breath to "power up" the flow of Reiki energy. As they place their hands on or over a client, they can visualize Reiki flowing with each exhalation. They can also gently guide the

⁶ Aletheia Luna (2023), as above.

⁷ McCraty, R. (2015) *Science of the Heart: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance, Volume 2*. HeartMath Institute.

client to breathe into the area being treated, enhancing the receptivity of the tissues and energy centres.

- **Pranic healing** Breath is absolutely integral to Pranic Healing. Master Choa Kok Sui's system involves specific "pranic breathing" patterns for sweeping (cleansing) and energizing. The healer uses their breath to gather Prana and then project it with intention into the client's depleted chakras or aura⁸.
- **Quantum-touch** This modality is built upon the principle of "breathing through" the area to be healed. The practitioner uses various breathing techniques (including "circle breathing" and "fire breath") to raise the vibrational frequency of their own energy field and then, through resonance and intention, entrain the client's field to this higher frequency, facilitating self-healing⁹.
- **Sound healing with breath** Techniques like "Vowel Toning" or "Chanting" combine breath with sound. The healer or client can use the exhale to vocalize sounds (e.g., "AHH" for the heart chakra, "OM" for the crown) that vibrate and clear energetic blockages. The breath is the fuel for the transformative power of sound. (See section 9.2 *Chakras*, Individual Exercise 1)

7.2.4 The theoretical and scientific foundations – why breathwork works

7.2.4.1 Physiological basis: nervous system regulation

Modern science supports the idea that breath affects more than just the lungs. Conscious breathing techniques can:

- Activate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation
- Reduce cortisol levels and stress response
- Improve heart rate variability, a marker of resilience
- Enhance oxygenation and detoxification.

The most empirically validated effect of controlled breathing is its direct influence on the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS regulates involuntary bodily functions and is divided into the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), responsible for the "fight-or-flight" response, and the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), which governs the "rest-and-digest" state¹⁰.

⁸ Choa Kok Sui, M. (2005) *Pranic Healing*. Institute for Inner Studies Publishing Foundation.

⁹ Gordon, R. (2006) *Quantum-Touch: The Power to Heal*. North Atlantic Books.

¹⁰ Ibid.

- **Stress and the biofield** A client presenting for energy healing is often in a state of chronic low-grade stress or SNS dominance (fight-flight). This physiological state is characterized by elevated cortisol, increased heart rate, and muscle tension. From an energetic perspective, stress creates contraction, fragmentation, and depletion in the biofield (the energy field that surrounds and permeates the physical body). It becomes difficult for the client to receive energy, as their system is primed for defence, not reception.
- **The parasympathetic shift** Slow, deep, diaphragmatic breathing is one of the most rapid and effective ways to stimulate the vagus nerve, the primary component of the PNS¹¹. This induces a state of physiological calm, slowing the heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and reducing stress hormones. This shift is the foundational prerequisite for effective energy healing. A relaxed body allows for a coherent energy field, reducing resistance and enabling the client's system to become receptive to the subtle energies being channelled.

These effects create a physiological environment conducive to healing. Breathwork can shift clients from a state of hyperarousal to one of receptivity and relaxation.¹²

7.2.4.2 The psychological basis: quietening the mind

The incessant activity of the mind—the "monkey mind"—is a significant obstacle to healing. Mental chatter creates erratic energy patterns and keeps the client identified with their problems rather than their innate state of wholeness.

- **Anchoring awareness** The breath serves as a natural anchor for present-moment awareness. By directing attention to the physical sensations of inhalation and exhalation, the client's mind is drawn away from anxious thoughts about the past or future (a process central to mindfulness meditation)¹³. A quiet mind allows for a deeper perception of subtle energy and a greater openness to the healing process.

7.2.4.3 The scientific lens – evidence and mechanisms

The scientific community is increasingly validating the benefits of controlled breathing, which lends credibility to the intuitive practices of energy healers.

¹¹ Gerritsen, R. J. S., & Band, G. P. H. (2018) "Breath of Life: The Respiratory Vagal Stimulation Model of Contemplative Activity." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *12*, 397. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2018.00397>.

¹² Reality Pathing (2025) "Breathwork in Therapy: Evidence-Based Approaches for Healing" from www.realitypathing.com/breathwork-in-therapy-evidence-based-approaches-for-healing/

¹³ Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990) *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*. Delta

- **Neurophysiology** Studies using fMRI show that slow breathing activates regions of the brainstem (the pre-Bötzinger complex), the amygdala (emotional processing), and the insula (interoception)¹⁴. This suggests a direct mechanism for how breath regulates emotion and self-awareness.
- **Psychophysiology** Research confirms that slow-paced breathing (around 6 breaths per minute) increases heart rate variability (HRV), a key marker of autonomic nervous system (ANS) flexibility and resilience¹⁵. High HRV is associated with better emotional regulation and health outcomes.
- **Biofield science** While still an emerging field, studies are attempting to measure the biofield. The heart's coherent electromagnetic field, amplified by breath and emotion, is one plausible biophysical mechanism for how a healer's energized state could influence a client's biofield¹⁶.

7.2.5 *Breath as a bridge between energetic and physical realms*

Breath occupies a unique position in human physiology—it is both voluntary and involuntary. This duality makes it a bridge between the conscious and unconscious, the physical and energetic. In energy healing, breath serves as a conduit for:

- Grounding and centring both healer and client
- Activating and directing energy flow
- Facilitating emotional release
- Connecting with higher consciousness.

Breath is “an energetic link between the lighter vibrations of subtle energy and the denser vibrations of matter”¹⁷.

7.2.6 *Practical applications – techniques for the healer and client*

7.2.6.1 *For the healer: preparation and empowerment*

Breath can be used by the healer to prepare for the healing session. Before beginning a healing session, the healer must ensure they are a clear, grounded, and compassionate channel. If a healer has arrived late, emotionally charged, frantic or distraught, they can use

¹⁴ Zaccaro, A., Piarulli, A., Laurino, M., Garbella, E., Menicucci, D., Neri, B., & Gemignani, A. (2018) “How Breath-Control Can Change Your Life: A Systematic Review on Psycho-Physiological Correlates of Slow Breathing” *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *12*, 353. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2018.00353>.

¹⁵ Lehrer, P. M., & Gevirtz, R. (2014) “Heart rate variability biofeedback: how and why does it work?” *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*, 756. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00756>.

¹⁶ McCraty (2015), as above

¹⁷ Nancy Hausauer, as above.

breathing techniques to help clear and ground ready to attune to spirit. There are variety of techniques that may help, depending upon the situation and preferences of the healer.

- **Grounding and centring breath** A simple 3-5 minute practice of feeling the sit bones connect with the chair and the feet with the floor, combined with deep **diaphragmatic breathing**, can root the healer's energy. Visualizing breathing in energy from the earth and breathing out any personal tensions clears the practitioner's field.
 - **Breath to move and clear energy** Breath can be used to get the healer's energy running, even mobilising stagnant energy and facilitating the release of whatever you need to let go of. Techniques include:
 - **Pumping breath** Using the exhale to push stuck energy out of a specific area, followed by an inhale to draw in light and consciousness.
 - **Chakra breathing** Directing breath into specific chakras to activate and balance them.
 - **Wave breathing** Synchronizing breath with hand movements to guide energy flow through the body.
 - **Breath for emotional release** Emotions are energy in motion. When suppressed, they create blockages in the energy field, which can then affect your healing. Breathwork can facilitate emotional release by:
 - Creating a safe container for expression.
 - Activating the limbic system (our emotional brain), which is essential for emotional regulation, memory, and various other behavioural aspects such as motivation and response.
 - Allowing cleansing and integration.
- Connected breathing** — a technique with no pause between inhale and exhale — is particularly effective for surfacing and releasing buried emotions. People often experience spontaneous crying, laughter, or insight during this process.¹⁸
- **Breath and visualization** Combining breath with visualization enhances its healing power. Techniques include:
 - **Inhaling light** Visualizing breathing in white or golden light to cleanse and energize your field.

¹⁸ Reality Pathing (2025), as above.

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- **Exhaling darkness** Releasing stagnant or negative energy with each breath out.
- **Chakra illumination** Breathing into a chakra while visualizing it glowing brighter.

These practices engage the imagination and intention, amplifying the energetic effect.¹⁹ I'm sure many healers have used these techniques already in other settings.

- **Breath for energetic protection** Healers can also use breath to protect their energy field during sessions. Techniques include:
 - **Shielding breath** Visualizing a protective bubble forming around the body with each inhale.
 - **Clearing breath** Exhaling any absorbed energy after a session.
 - **Centring breath** Returning to one's own energetic core.

These practices can help maintain boundaries and prevent energetic depletion.²⁰

- **Breath and intuition** Breathwork enhances intuitive awareness. By calming the mind and tuning into the body, healers can access deeper guidance. Techniques include:
 - Breathing into the third eye chakra
 - Using breath to enter meditative states
 - Listening to the body's response to breath.

This intuitive connection enriches the healing process and fosters self-trust.

- **Heart-Coherence breathing** The HeartMath Institute's technique is highly effective:
 - **Focus** Shift attention to the area of the heart.
 - **Breathe** Breathe slowly and deeply, imagining the breath flowing in and out of the heart area (5-6 seconds in, 5-6 seconds out).
 - **Feel** Activate a genuine feeling of appreciation, care, or compassion for someone or something.

This practice aligns the healer's intention with the vibrational quality of the heart, ensuring the energy they channel is imbued with coherence and love²¹.

¹⁹ Nancy Hausauer, as above.

²⁰ Nancy Hausauer, as above.

²¹ Childre, D., & Martin, H. (1999). The HeartMath Solution. HarperSanFrancisco

- **Breath to energise** Practitioners of Pranic Healing utilize specific "pranic breathing" techniques to energize themselves. This involves a slow, full inhalation, a brief retention to absorb Prana, and a relaxed exhalation, often while focusing on the crown or heart chakra²².

Harry Edwards calls this "cosmic breathing": "cosmic" referring to the health-giving energies of nature around us (e.g. of the earth, sun, sea) that we can consciously breathe in to build up an abundance of energy. He recommends this as part of the attunement process for absent or local healing. For the healer having entered into a meditative state and *"established 'peace within', he should become consciously aware of his breathing. Then he should inhale very gently and slowly through the nose, filling the lungs, and, after a pause to give time for the blood to receive oxygen and strength, breathe out the used air just as slowly. As the inhalations take place the sitter should in all confidence be conscious of taking in with the air, inner strength and vitality to supply his body with cleansing and invigorating forces. As he exhales he should also feel conscious of exuding waste.*

*The normal healthy body naturally absorbs a blending of all the cosmic forces necessary to maintain a good health balance, but by purposefully characterising the inhalations one strengthens and invigorates oneself and fills up the reservoir of inner strength. ... Therefore, as the sitter builds up his reserves of energy and he feels this new strength, his inner mind can be more attuned to Spirit and his intercessory thoughts for healing to reach a sick one will be better received."*²³

7.2.6.2 For the client: during the session

The healer can guide the client's breathing to facilitate relaxation and healing. This can be done through verbal instruction or silent synchronization.

- **Preparing the client: breath for grounding and presence** Sometimes clients arrive at healing sessions mentally scattered or emotionally overwhelmed. Often, clients are shallow chest-breathers. Breathwork can be used at the beginning of a session to:
 - Anchor the client in the present moment
 - Calm their nervous system
 - Establish energetic rapport.

A simple technique is **diaphragmatic breathing** (a.k.a. *hara* breathing), where the client is gently asked to breathe deeply into their belly. Optionally, the healer can

²² Choa Kok Sui, M. (2005), as above.

²³ Harry Edwards (1974) *A Guide to the Understanding and Practice of Spiritual Healing*, Healer Publishing, pp32-33.

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instruct them to place a hand on their belly and feel it rise on the inhalation and fall on the exhalation. This simple act immediately activates their vagus nerve and promotes relaxation.²⁴

Instead of asking the client to breathe deeply, the healer can use **synchronized breathing**. The healer can silently synchronize their own breath with the client's and then slowly move into a diaphragmatic breathing pattern and let the client's breathing naturally align. This creates a powerful resonant loop between practitioner and client. Some other healers visualize drawing out stagnant energy from the client's field on their own inhalation, and project cleansed, revitalized energy on their exhalation, but that is not part of spiritual healing as we don't interfere with the energy being channelled from spirit.

- **To redirect a client's thoughts: directed breath with intention** For specific issues, the client can be guided to "breathe into" a particular area of discomfort or a chakra. For example, "As you inhale, imagine a soothing, golden light (or divine energy) flowing into your lower back. As you exhale, imagine releasing any tension or darkness from that area." This would not be a normal thing to use during spiritual healing and should only be considered if the client is in extreme discomfort such that they can't settle into the healing, and you need something to deflect their brain away from the pain so they can. This uses the mind's power of intention, coupled with the physiological reality of increased blood flow and energy to that area, to facilitate release and healing.
- **To reduce anxiety** Anxiety can be triggered by all sorts of things and situations in someone prone to it, and it can be difficult for them to bring it back under control. Developed by Dr. Andrew Weil, the **4-7-8 technique (relaxing breath)** is excellent for rapidly reducing anxiety and inducing tranquillity²⁵. Again, this isn't part of spiritual healing but if someone presents with an anxiety attack or develops one in your healing environment, it gives you another option to help them so you can continue onto the spiritual healing. The client is instructed to:
 - Exhale completely through the mouth.
 - Inhale quietly through the nose for a count of 4.
 - Hold the breath for a count of 7.
 - Exhale completely through the mouth for a count of 8.

²⁴ Nancy Hausauer, as above.

²⁵ Weil, A. (1999) Breathing: The Master Key to Self Healing. (Audio CD). Sounds True.

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This pattern, repeated 3-4 times, acts as a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system and is perfect for beginning a session.

- **Alternate nostril breathing (*Nadi Shodhana*)** This yogic technique is renowned for balancing the left and right hemispheres of the brain and harmonizing the *Ida* and *Pingala* nadis²⁶. It creates profound mental clarity and energetic equilibrium. A healer might use this at the start of a session to centre a frazzled client or at the end to integrate the healing work. It's an option but not part of spiritual healing.
- **Breath as a feedback tool** Experienced energy healers often use breath to assess a client's energetic state (see also section 3.9 *Using your senses for feedback*). Observing the rhythm, depth, and quality of breath can reveal:
 - Emotional blockages
 - Energetic stagnation
 - Disconnection from the body.

For example, shallow breathing may indicate anxiety or suppressed emotion, while erratic breath patterns can signal energetic fragmentation. By tuning into the breath, healers can gain insight into the state of the client and look for an improvement in the client's breathing patterns at the end of the healing.

- **Breath in hands-on healing** During some hands-on energy healing modalities (e.g., Reiki, Therapeutic Touch), breath can be used to:
 - Synchronize with the client's energy rhythm
 - Direct energy through the hands
 - Maintain the healer's own energetic integrity.

Some practitioners breathe consciously while channelling energy, using the inhale to draw in universal energy and the exhale to transmit it through their hands. In spiritual healing, we don't expect the healing energy to travel through our body and out our hands alone, although we know our hands are powerful healing tools. We ask for the energy to be sent to, through and around us, where it can be drawn upon by the client via our physical and spiritual bodies. We can still use deep breathing to synchronise with the incoming energy, but we don't need to constrain or manipulate it by forcing it via a set physical path.

²⁶ Sovik (2005), as above.

7.2.6.3 *Closing the healing session*

- **Breathwork for integration and closure** At the end of a healing session, breath can be used to:
 - Ground the client
 - Integrate the healing experience
 - Seal the energy field.

A few minutes of slow, rhythmic breathing helps clients return to their baseline and carry the healing into their daily life. As long as the healer is breathing deeply, the client's breathing will synchronize through the process of entrainment as they become more alert. Some healers might guide clients to breathe gratitude into their heart space, reinforcing the positive shift.

If a client has low blood pressure or a history of feeling light headed or dizzy when they stand up after healing, the healer might remind them to take some deep breaths before standing to aerate their blood supply and get their heart beating faster again ready for motion.

- **Breath and the healer's own closing practice** Healers might also use breathwork for their own energetic hygiene and growth. Benefits include:
 - Clearing absorbed energy
 - Recharging vitality
 - Deepening spiritual connection.

Daily breathwork supports the healer's resilience and presence, enhancing their capacity to serve others.

7.2.7 *Contraindications and ethical considerations*

While breathwork is generally safe, certain techniques may not be suitable for all healers. Contraindications include:

- Cardiovascular conditions
- Pregnancy (for intense breathwork)
- Epilepsy.

Breathwork is usually safe when gentle and non-straining, with a few cautions:

- **Avoid over-breathing and prolonged or forceful breath-holds.** Hyperventilation can provoke dizziness, paresthesia (numbness, burning, tingling in extremities), and panic in susceptible people. Holding your breath for a long time can temporarily

increase the pressure inside your chest, similar to what happens during a Valsalva manoeuvre (where you try to exhale forcefully with your mouth closed and nose pinched shut—like you're blowing up a balloon without letting any air out). Keep holds minimal or skip them if you have cardiovascular disease, are pregnant, have glaucoma, or if you feel head pressure—when in doubt, no holds. ²⁷

- **Forceful breaths** should be avoided for individuals with:
 - High blood pressure
 - Heart conditions
 - Glaucoma or retinal detachment
 - History of stroke or seizures
 - Panic disorder or PTSD (as intense breathwork can sometimes trigger cathartic emotional releases).
- **Panic-prone healers:** Gentle, regular breathing is best; if you have a history of panic, avoid strong techniques (e.g., rapid breathing, aggressive retentions).²⁸
- **Pace and Patience** Never force a breathing pattern. Someone with high anxiety may find a long breath retention frightening. Start simply with diaphragmatic breathing and progress only if comfortable.
- **Use exhale-elongation and slow pacing as your default.** These emphasize parasympathetic tone with lower risk than depth-driven practices. ²⁹

Ethical breathwork practice prioritizes safety, respect, and empowerment.

7.2.8 *Breath as a sacred practice*

Ultimately, breathwork is a sacred act. It honours the life force within and connects us to the divine. In healing sessions, breath becomes:

- A prayer
- A transmission
- A remembrance of wholeness.

As one practitioner writes, “With each breath of air, I feel ‘ME’ inhaling the molecules of ‘Not-Me’”³⁰—a poetic reflection of breath as unity.

²⁷ Lehrer PI M, Gevirtz R (2014) “Heart rate variability biofeedback: how and why does it work?” *Frontiers in Psychology* Volume 5 2014, www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00756

²⁸ Kim S, Wollburg E, Roth WT. “Opposing breathing therapies for panic disorder: a randomized controlled trial of lowering vs raising end-tidal P(CO₂)”. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. 2012 Jul;73(7):931-9. doi: 10.4088/JCP.11m07068. PMID: 22901344.

²⁹ Lehrer PI M, Gevirtz R (2014), as above.

³⁰ Nancy Hausauer, as above.



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The sacredness of breath and connection to health is also reflected in Māori beliefs. In *te ao Māori* (the Māori world view), *hā* (breath) is a sacred force symbolizing life, spirit, and divine connection. The phrase *Tīhei mauriora!*—“the sneeze of life”—is often spoken in *whaikōrero* (speeches) to acknowledge the breath that gives life^{31 32}. According to Māori creation stories, Tane Mahuta breathed life into Hineahuone, the first woman, using breath gifted by *Io* (God the creator)³³. Breath is exchanged in the *hongi*, symbolizing unity between *atua* (God) and *tangata* (man)³⁴. Terms like *hau* (life force) and *hauora* (be healthy) reflect vitality and health³⁵. Breathing practices are embedded in *karakia* (prayer), *mōteatea* (grieving), and *haka* (dance), linking physical rhythm to spiritual presence³⁶. Breath is not just air—it is essence, ancestry, and connection.

7.2.9 Learning for spiritual healers

The conscious integration of breathing techniques into spiritual healing is not merely an add-on to energy healing; it can deeply enrich the experience by grounding the abstract idea of 'energy work' in the physical, biological processes of the body. The breath is the ultimate bridge—connecting mind and body, spirit and matter, healer and client.

Using breathing techniques, spiritual healers can effectively prepare themselves as clear vessels and guide their clients into a deeply receptive state, thus enhancing the flow of divine energy to facilitate release, balance, and restoration. Breathing techniques can amplify the effectiveness of our healing sessions and facilitate profound transformation. This synergistic approach honours both ancient wisdom and modern science, offering a holistic, powerful, and deeply intuitive path to healing.

Whether used to ground, release, energize, or connect, breathwork can enhance every aspect of the healing journey. Spiritual healers can integrate breathing techniques at every stage of a session: preparation, the healing itself, and integration/closure.

However adding breathing techniques is optional as spiritual healing will work without them. They are another tool for spiritual healers to investigate and decide if they will enhance their spiritual healing capability, or just complicate and detract from it. The choice is yours.

³¹ Te Kuru o te Marama Dewes (2021) “Tīhei mauriora: the history and tikanga of our breath” The Spinoff from www.thespinnoff.co.nz/atea/04-11-2021/tihe-mauriora-the-history-and-tikanga-of-our-breath

³² Wakaminenga Maori Government of Nu Tirenī – New Zealand (2023) “Tīhei Mauriora!” from www.govt.maori.nz/tihe-mauriora/

³³ Julia Wikeepa (2023) “The Sacred Hā (Breath): Nurturing Wairua and Cultivating Growth” Hā Habitat from www.hahabitnz.com/blogs/news/the-sacred-ha-breath-nurturing-wairua-and-cultivating-growth

³⁴ Te Kuru o te Marama Dewes (2021), as above.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.



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Group Exercise 1

In your healing classes, experiment with some of the healing techniques mentioned in this chapter, when you prepare and perform a healing session on each other. At a minimum use diaphragmatic breathing to:

- prepare for your session (ground, clear and get your energies flowing freely before attuning),
- relax the client as you begin the session, and
- then close the healing session for both the client (ground and integrate) and yourself (clear and recharge).

Note how you and your client feel beforehand and afterwards, and how the healing session progresses. Does it feel any different to a spiritual healing session performed without breathwork? Have you noticed any other differences?