

a free guide from

inner flow

breathwork starter guide

**your nervous system
has been asking for this.**

three techniques. real science. no perfection required.

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why I made this

Mid last year, I left my job.

Not because I had a plan — but because my body made it very clear that I couldn't keep going the way I was going. I was burnt out. Completely flat. And for the first time in a long time, I had nowhere to be and nothing to perform.

That stillness was uncomfortable at first. But it was in that space that I found breathwork. And it changed everything.

I went on to qualify as a breathwork instructor through Breathless. And the more I shared these tools with women in my life — women running on empty, carrying more than anyone could see — the more I realised how many of us are walking around completely disconnected from our own nervous systems.

This guide is where I'd start with anyone who comes to me.

Three techniques. The science behind why they work. And a simple way to begin.

You don't need to be good at this. You don't need a perfect morning routine or a meditation background. You just need your breath — and a few minutes.

I hope this is the beginning of something for you.

Taylor x

breathwork instructor · qualified through breathless

your nervous system, simply explained

Your autonomic nervous system runs in the background of everything you do.

It controls your heart rate, your breathing, your digestion, your immune response — and perhaps most importantly for this guide, it controls how safe or unsafe your body feels at any given moment.

It has two primary modes:

Sympathetic — fight or flight. This is your survival system. When it's activated, your heart rate rises, your muscles tense, digestion slows, and your brain shifts into threat-detection mode. This is useful in genuine danger. The problem is that modern life — deadlines, relationships, financial stress, never switching off — keeps many of us in this mode almost constantly.

Parasympathetic — rest and digest. This is your recovery system. When it's active, your heart rate slows, your body repairs, your thinking clears, and you feel safe. This is where healing happens.

Most people living with chronic stress, burnout, or persistent anxiety are spending the majority of their time in sympathetic dominance — whether they can feel it or not.

Breathwork is one of the most direct and evidence-based ways to shift this.

The breath is the only autonomic function you can consciously control. And through that control, you can send a deliberate signal to your nervous system — telling it to move from threat to safety.

That's what the three techniques in this guide do. Each one is backed by neuroscience. Each one is accessible right now, wherever you are.

you are not broken. you are dysregulated. and that is something we can work with.

the physiological sigh

your fastest reset. anywhere. anytime.

WHEN TO USE THIS

Use this when you feel suddenly overwhelmed, anxious, or like your system has spiked. In traffic. Before a hard conversation. When you wake at 2am and your mind won't stop. This is your emergency reset — it works in under 30 seconds.

HOW TO DO IT

- 1 Take a full breath in through your nose.
 - 2 At the top of that inhale, sniff in a little more — a short, sharp second inhale through the nose. This fully inflates the small air sacs in your lungs (alveoli) that collapse under stress.
 - 3 Now exhale — long, slow, and completely through your mouth. Let it all go.
 - 4 Repeat twice. That's it.
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WHY IT WORKS

The double inhale re-inflates collapsed alveoli, allowing more oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange. The extended exhale activates the vagus nerve, triggering an immediate parasympathetic response. Research from Stanford University found this to be one of the most effective real-time stress reduction techniques available.

extended exhale breathing

the exhale is your brake pedal. use it.

WHEN TO USE THIS

Use this when you need to come down slowly — after a stressful day, before sleep, or any time you feel chronically activated but not in an acute spike. This is your daily regulation tool. Four minutes of this can measurably shift your nervous system state. Safe for use during pregnancy.

HOW TO DO IT

- 1 Find a comfortable position — seated or lying down.
 - 2 Breathe in through your nose for four counts. Let your belly rise first, then your chest.
 - 3 Breathe out through your mouth for eight counts. Slow, steady, controlled.
 - 4 The exhale is always twice as long as the inhale. That ratio is what matters.
 - 5 Repeat for four to six rounds — or as long as you need.
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WHY IT WORKS

Your exhale is controlled by the parasympathetic nervous system. The longer your exhale relative to your inhale, the more powerfully you activate the vagal brake — slowing heart rate and reducing cortisol. This is one of the most well-researched breathing patterns in clinical stress reduction.

box breathing

equal parts in, hold, out, hold. balance in four counts.

WHEN TO USE THIS

Use this when you need to feel grounded and present — before an important meeting, during a difficult moment, or as a daily practice to build nervous system resilience over time. Unlike the extended exhale, box breathing works with both sides of the nervous system — calming without sedating.

HOW TO DO IT

- 1 Breathe in through your nose for four counts.
- 2 Hold at the top for four counts. Gentle hold — no gripping.
- 3 Breathe out through your mouth for four counts.
- 4 Hold at the bottom for four counts. Then begin again.
- 5 Repeat for three to five rounds. You can build to longer counts as you feel comfortable.

WHY IT WORKS

Box breathing creates a balanced rhythm between sympathetic and parasympathetic activity — reducing heart rate variability in a way that promotes calm alertness rather than sedation. It's used in military training, performance psychology, and surgical preparation for this reason. It regulates without flattening.

a simple daily practice

You don't need an hour. You don't need perfect conditions. Here's a sustainable starting point — three minutes, once a day.

morning — arrive

Before you reach for your phone. One minute of extended exhale breathing (4 in, 8 out). This sets your nervous system baseline for the day.

midday — reset

Two rounds of the physiological sigh. When you feel activation building, this is your 30-second intervention. Use it before it becomes overwhelming.

evening — release

Three to five rounds of box breathing before sleep. This transitions your nervous system from the demands of the day into genuine rest.

when you need it — respond

The physiological sigh. Anytime. Anywhere. This is your body's built-in emergency reset and it works every time.

These techniques are safe for most people. If you are pregnant, please avoid breath holds.
If you have a respiratory or cardiac condition, consult your healthcare provider first.

this is just the beginning.

These three techniques are your foundation. But breathwork goes much deeper than a starter guide can hold.

inner flow app — join the waitlist

I'm building Inner Flow — a breathwork app designed for real life. Structured programmes, guided sessions, and nervous system tools you can access anywhere. The first 100 people on the waitlist get 30 days free at launch.

follow on instagram

Weekly breathwork techniques, nervous system education, and honest conversation about what it actually takes to regulate in a life that doesn't slow down. Find me at @innerflow.breathwork

in-person sessions — coming soon

Relaxation and reset sessions will be available soon on the Gold Coast. Follow along to be the first to know when bookings open.

your body already knows how to come home.

breathwork is just the way back.