

Breaths That Work™

STRAW BREATHING

GUIDE

By

Stress Straws®

Medical Disclaimer

WARNINGS: Stress Straws pose a choking and strangulation hazard. Use under adult supervision only. Not suitable for children under 3. Clean before first use. Stress Straws representatives are not medical professionals. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or dial 911. Stress Straws does not provide medical advice. Stress Straws are not intended to serve as a substitute for the consultation, diagnosis, and/or medical treatment of a qualified physician or healthcare provider. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your health. Any reliance on any information or products provided is solely at your own risk. Stress Straws makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information contained on or available through this document, it's products or website. Individual results will vary. Stress Straws makes no claims to the effectiveness of the contents of this document. Stop using if feeling lightheaded or dizzy. These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. These are suggestive deep breathing exercises only.

What is breath work?



UfaBizPhoto/ Shutterstock.com

Breath work uses deep breathing exercises to help heal the mind and body.

What is straw breathing?



Stockah/ Shutterstock.com

A straw can be used as a deep breathing tool to effortlessly slow and extend your exhale making breath work easy.

The Science of Straw Breathing

Breathing connects the mind and body.

When we are stressed, the "fight or flight" response is activated with short and shallow breaths.

We can override this reflex with long and slow deep breaths that signal our brain to rest and relax.

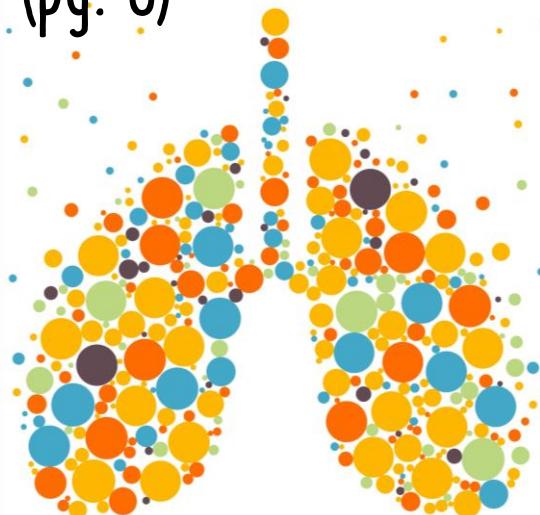
When we control our breathing, we can control our mind and body.

Let's explore some Breaths That Work™

Breaths That Work™

For:

- Stress Relief (pg. 1)
- Anxiety (pg. 2)
- Mental Health (pg. 3)
- Meditation (pg. 4)
- Children (pg. 5)
- Sleeping (pg. 6)
- Addiction Withdrawal (pg. 7)
- Lungs, Heart and Digestion (pg. 8)
- Chronic Pain (pg. 9)
- Productivity (pg. 10)



Straw Breathing For Stress Relief

Benefit: According to a 2017 study, "the use of deep breathing techniques has lead to an effective improvement in the management of stress in daily life."¹

Technique: 2-to-1 Breathing

Uses: To overcome the "fight or flight" response activated when stressed.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Inhale deeply through the nose.

Step 3) Gently exhale through the straw until lungs are empty.

Step 4) Repeat this breathing cycle until calm.

TIP: If necessary, place tip of tongue on straw end in mouth to inhale only through the nose.

TIP: Aim for an 8-12 second exhale that is twice as long as your inhale.

¹ Perciavalle V, Blandini M, Fecarotta P, Buscemi A, Di Corrado D, Bertolo L, Fichera F, Coco M. The role of deep breathing on stress. *Neurol Sci.* 2017 Mar;38(3):451-458. doi: 10.1007/s10072-016-2790-8. Epub 2016 Dec 19. PMID: 27995346.

Straw Breathing For Anxiety

Benefit: A 2005 series of papers found evidence that breathing exercises could help manage anxiety and depression.¹

Technique: Breath Counting

Uses: To help calm and quiet the mind by counting breathing cycles.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Inhale deeply through the nose.

Step 3) Gently exhale through the straw until lungs are empty.

Step 4) Pause and count this as breathing cycle "one".

Step 5) Repeat for ten breathing cycles counting each cycle.

TIP: To prevent whistling noise and blowing, do NOT purse lips around straw.

TIP: Stay focused and keep track of the breathing cycle number. Start over if you forget which number you are on.

¹ Brown RP, Gerbarg PL. Sudarshan Kriya yogic breathing in the treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression: part I-neurophysiologic model. *J Altern Complement Med.* 2005;11(1):189-201.

Straw Breathing For Mental Health

Benefit: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs says deep breathing, "can be especially helpful to Veterans and civilians who've experienced traumatic events."¹

Technique: Focused Breathing

Uses: To bring awareness to your breath to help aid in the treatment of psychological conditions such as depression, trauma, anger, OCD, ASD and ADHD.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Inhale deeply through the nose.

Step 3) Pause and hold for a count of 3.

Step 4) Gently exhale through straw until lungs are empty.

Step 5) Pause and hold for a count of 3.

Step 6) Repeat this breathing cycle until calm.

TIP: Focus and become aware of the stillness during the two pauses.

TIP: Use a count length of equal pauses most comfortable and natural for you.

¹ VA, US. "Veterans Affairs." *United States Department of Veterans Affairs*, Aetna Inc., 19 May 2014, www.va.gov/vetsinworkplace/docs/em_eap_exercise_breathing.asp.

Straw Breathing For Meditation

Benefit: According to a study in the Journal of Neurophysiology, "paying attention to our breath may activate regions of our brain associated with emotion, attention and awareness."¹

Technique: Mantra Breathing

Uses: To quiet and focus your mind on a positive trigger word such as "love", "relaxation" or "healing".

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Inhale deeply through the nose while thinking of a positive trigger word.

Step 3) Gently exhale through straw while thinking the trigger word until lungs are empty.

Step 4) Repeat this breathing cycle everyday.

TIP: Other terms for "trigger word" can be "intention" or "mantra". Use only positive words or phrases.

TIP: Refocus any wandering thoughts by constantly repeating and returning to your trigger word.

¹ Herrero JL, Khuvis S, Yeagle E, Cerf M, Mehta AD. Breathing above the brain stem: volitional control and attentional modulation in humans. *Journal of Neurophysiology*. 2018 Jan 1;119(1):145-159. doi: 10.1152/jn.00551.2017. Epub 2017 Sep 27. PMID: 28954895; PMCID: PMC5866472.

Straw Breathing For Children

Benefit: A 2020 study found that breathing exercises as part of a mindfulness practice, "taught the students to take a moment to stop and breathe. This reduced impulsiveness and allowed them to make better decisions."¹

Technique: Bee Breathing

Uses: To help children slow down and focus better.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Inhale deeply through the nose.

Step 3) Gently exhale through the straw while making a deep buzzing sound by humming the letters ZZZZZZ.

Step 4) Repeat this breathing cycle until calm.

TIP: Humming takes advantage of the vibrational energy of "Om" mantra chants.

¹ Juliano AC, Alexander AO, DeLuca J, Genova H. Feasibility of a school-based mindfulness program for improving inhibitory skills in children with autism spectrum disorder. Res Dev Disabil. 2020 Jun;101:103641. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2020.103641. Epub 2020 Apr 18. PMID: 32315929.

Straw Breathing For Sleeping

Benefit: A 2019 study believes, "slow breathing techniques in adjunct to relaxation techniques and sleep hygiene may be a more powerful tool in combating insomnia than the prevailing method of using hypnotics and other pharmaceutical interventions."¹

Technique: 4-7-8 Breathing

Uses: To help insomnia and restlessness by quieting the mind.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Gently close eyes.

Step 3) Inhale deeply through the nose counting to 4.

Step 4) Pause and hold for 7 counts.

Step 5) Gently exhale through the straw for 8-12 counts.

Step 6) Repeat this breathing cycle until asleep.

TIP: Breath counts are an approximation. Focus on the ratio of a shorter inhale, medium pause and longer exhale than the exact number.

¹Jerath, Ravinder et al. "Self-Regulation of Breathing as an Adjunctive Treatment of Insomnia." *Frontiers in psychiatry* vol. 9 780. 29 Jan. 2019, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00780

Straw Breathing For Addiction Withdrawal

Benefit: A 2004 study on addictive behaviors found that, "controlled deep breathing significantly reduced smoking withdrawal symptoms."¹

Technique: Mouth Breathing

Uses: To mimic the pull of inhaling smoke and replace the oral fixation of smoking and vaping.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Inhale deeply through the mouth using the straw.

Step 3) Exhale through the straw as if blowing out smoke.

Step 4) Repeat this breathing cycle 10 times.

TIP: Use during smoking activities such as while driving, drinking or during breaks.

TIP: Try holding the straw between fingers to replace the hand-to-mouth habit.

¹ McClernon FJ, Westman EC, Rose JE. The effects of controlled deep breathing on smoking withdrawal symptoms in dependent smokers. *Addict Behav.* 2004 Jun;29(4):765-72. doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2004.02.005. PMID: 15135559.

Straw Breathing For Lungs, Heart And Digestion

Benefit: A 2009 study found evidence that diaphragmatic breathing improved the quality of life for patients with asthma.¹ A scientific statement from the American Heart Association claims, "a short period of deep breathing has been shown to reduce systolic blood pressure".²

Technique: Belly/Diaphragmatic Breathing

Uses: To aid lung, heart and digestive issues.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly just below your ribs.

Step 3) Inhale through your nose feeling the hand on your belly rise as your stomach expands with air.

Step 4) Exhale through the straw feeling your hand fall as your belly deflates.

Step 5) Repeat this breathing cycle as recommended.

TIP: The hand on your chest should not move.

¹ Prem V, Sahoo RC, Adhikari P. Effect of diaphragmatic breathing exercise on quality of life in subjects with asthma: A systematic review. *Physiother Theory Pract.* 2013;29(4):271-277.

² Brook RD, Appel LJ, Rubenfire M, et al. Beyond medications and diet: alternative approaches to lowering blood pressure: a scientific statement from the American heart association. *Hypertension.* 2013;61(6):1360-1383.

Straw Breathing For Chronic Pain

Benefit: A 2012 article suggests, "that the way of breathing decisively influences autonomic and pain processing."¹

Technique: Body Scan Breathing

Uses: To connect the mind and body through breath awareness.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Comfortably sit up tall or lie down.

Step 3) Inhale through the nose and start scanning the body.

Step 4) Slowly exhale through the straw noticing how each part of the body feels.

Step 5) Repeat this breathing cycle as you slowly scan and relax each part of the body.

TIP: Move your awareness from the feet to the legs, stomach, back, shoulders, hands, arms, neck and head.

TIP: Stop and acknowledge any sensations within the body and try to release any tension through deep breaths.

¹ Busch V, Magerl W, Kern U, Haas J, Hajak G, Eichhammer P. The effect of deep and slow breathing on pain perception, autonomic activity, and mood processing—an experimental study. *Pain Med.* 2012;13(2):215-228.

Straw Breathing For Productivity

Benefit: A 2014 study on fast breathing techniques determined the positive "effects on executive function of manipulation in auditory working memory, central neural processing and sensory-motor performance."¹

Technique: Breath of Fire Breathing

Uses: To help you become more energized and focused to improve concentration.

Step 1) Place straw between closed flat lips.

Step 2) Inhale and exhale rapidly through the mouth using the straw.

Step 3) Do this rapid mouth breathing for as long as comfortable up to 1 minute.

Step 4) Breathe normally without the straw before repeating this cycle until alert.

TIP: Try contracting your abdominal muscles while exhaling.

TIP: This rapid breathing rhythm is similar to panting like a dog.

¹ Busch V, Magerl W, Kern U, Haas J, Hajak G, Eichhammer P. The effect of deep and slow breathing on pain perception, autonomic activity, and mood processing—an experimental study. *Pain Med.* 2012;13(2):215-228.