



## **The Blood Pressure Balance Programme**

### **Week 4 Handout**

#### **Regulating the Breath with Patterns**

Breathing techniques are designed to bring the body into a state of calm. Specific patterns that involve holding the breath for a period of time allow your body to replenish its oxygen. It also forces the mind and body to focus on regulating the breath and calming down the heart and mind.

#### **Rhythmic Breathing**

Rhythmic breathing is a simple breathing technique for beginners. It helps to establish a sound basis for pranayama practice for people who are used to shallow breathing. It can be practiced by people of any age/health condition, as long as there is no difficulty in breathing.

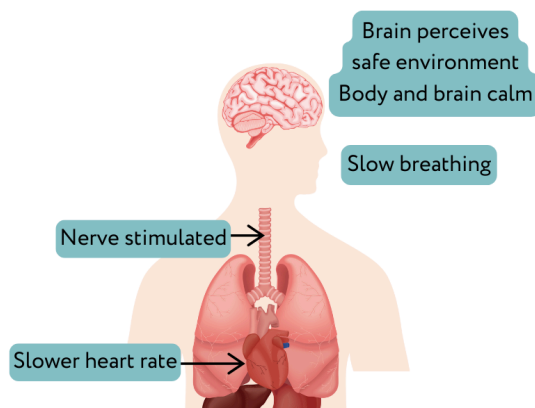
Most people are not aware of the respiratory system and breathing patterns resulting in irregular and shallow breathing. Breathing rhythmically essentially involves observing your breathing and simultaneous conditioning of inflow, outflow and retention of breath in a rhythmic pattern. Breathing rate slows down while following a relaxed rhythm.

## Extended Exhalation Breathing

Extended exhalation breathing is a simple breathing technique that brings profound benefits. This breathing practice is based on pranayama, an Ayurvedic form of breathwork that originated in India. Extended exhalation breathing is known for improving physiological responses, helping to calm the mind, and bringing focus

It's been linked to numerous health benefits including:

- **Stress reduction and anxiety management:** When everything feels overwhelming, extended exhalation breathing can act as an anchor. Focusing on your breath and rhythm gives your brain a break from the chaos, reducing feelings of anxiety and stress.
- **Improved focus and concentration:** Concentrating your thoughts on your breath moves your attention away from distractions, training your mind to concentrate. Consistent practice can improve your ability to focus on everyday tasks.
- **Lowered heart rate and blood pressure:** Chronic stress can cause problems with your heart health. Extended exhalation breathing can help regulate and lower your heart rate, reducing blood pressure.
- **Enhanced relaxation and sleep quality:** Extended exhalation breathing can help calm your mind and body, preparing you for a restful sleep.
- **Emotional balance:** Through regular practice, extended exhalation breathing offers a grounding effect for your emotions. This means your reactions are likely to become more measured, promoting balance and emotional wellbeing.



## Extended Exhalation and Lung health

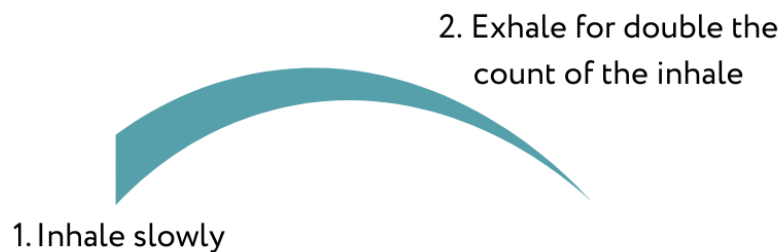
Larger lungs are associated with better heart health and longer life.

In the 1940s, Carl Stough, an American choral conductor turned breathing specialist, discovered that the key to bigger lungs lies in the out-breath. James Nestor nicely explains Stough's work in *Breath* “[t]he key to breathing, lung expansion, and the long life that came with it was on the other end of respiration. It was the transformative power of a full exhalation.”

To get more breath in, we must get all the stale air out.

### Extended Exhalations for Lung Capacity

Why it Works: Larger lungs are associated with better heart health and longer life. Exhaling fully allows room for more air to get in, helping to improve markers of lung capacity.



## "Important"

"We hurry through the so-called boring things in order to attend to that which we deem more important, interesting.

Perhaps the final freedom will be a recognition that everything in every moment is "essential" and that nothing at all is "important."

*By Helen M. Luke*

