

BY VENESSA HALL / AUGUST 29, 2017

BOX BREATHING: A BREATHING TECHNIQUE TO FOCUS THE MIND

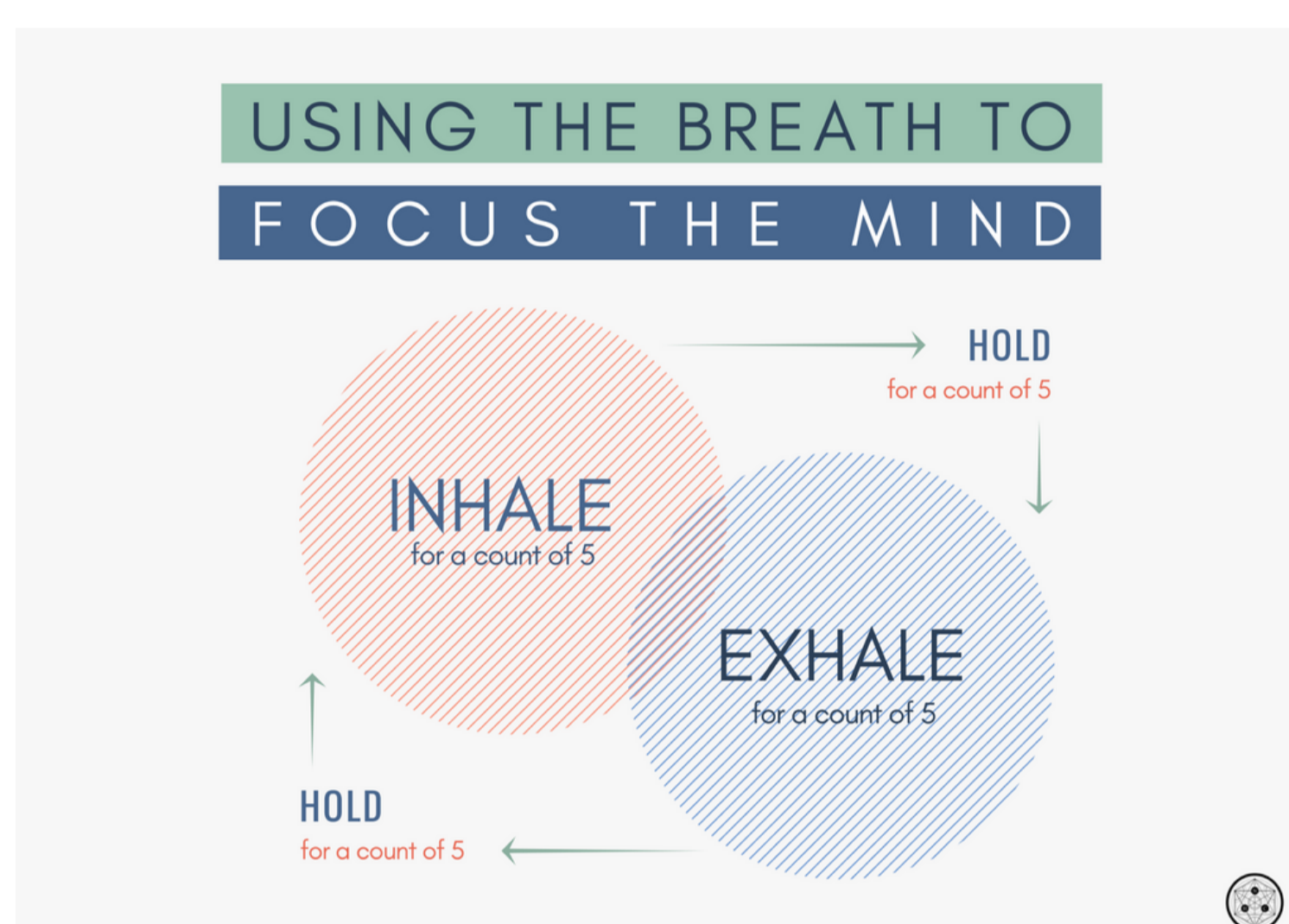


Learning to control the breath is one of the most powerful (and free!) neurohacks we have for improving concentration, managing stress, developing optimal health, and guiding our spiritual advancement.

Deep and rhythmic breathing helps you calm your thoughts, slow your heart rate, and regulate your autonomic nervous system. When you're working on something that requires your full and undivided attention, focused breathing helps you direct what your mind is paying attention to and focus on that thing without any distractions. When a high-pressure situation arises, it helps you control the physical and mental response to stress, preventing you from getting frazzled. When reflecting upon your own life and inner nature, this technique helps you slow down and gain more insight and self-knowledge. And at a practical and physical level, proper breathing enhances lung capacity, strengthens your immune system, and regulates your neuroendocrine system.

The following technique is recommended by neurohacker Mark Divine. A retired Navy SEAL Commander, Mark now runs SEALFIT in Encinitas, California, which is a program to develop elite level physical fitness and mental toughness.

He calls this breath control practice 'Box Breathing,' and cites it as his secret weapon for creating a balanced, energized state, and a calm, focused mind.



Here's how you do it:

The Basics:

- * On the inhale, expand the belly, then the diaphragm, then the upper chest. On the exhale, let the breath go first from the upper chest, then the ribcage, then the belly. This helps you relearn how to breathe deeply.
- * Inhale and exhale solely through the nose. It stimulates the nerves that activate the parasympathetic nervous system and counters the fear response of the sympathetic nervous system.

Steps:

- * Inhale for a count of 5.
- * Retain and hold the breath for a count of 5.
- * Exhale all the breath from the lungs for a count of 5.
- * Retain and hold the breath for a count of 5.
- * Repeat.

Length: Start with 1-3 minute "spot drills" several times a day before an important meeting or event. Work up to 5-10 minutes a day.

And that's it!

Mark says that this one technique alone is so transformative that with consistent execution it will profoundly change your life. I've found that it helps me calm down in stressful situations, making me capable of choosing how I want to respond instead of mindlessly reacting in anger or frustration.

If you want to learn other great tools and techniques for developing your mental power, check out Mark's book, **Unbeatable Mind**. The book is premised on the notion that we're far more capable than we think we are, and when we recognize and embrace the power of choice, we can use that power to shape our lives. It includes exercises to help you get clarity around your passion and values, techniques to overcome negative thoughts, ways to develop leadership skills, and how to be part of high performing teams.

What I loved about the book is that as a Navy SEAL, Mark is sharing tried and true methods that have worked for warriors and teams for thousands of years. It's legit. And at the same time, I was pleasantly surprised at the integrated model of human development he uses. He talks about putting the needs of others before self and taking a heart-centered approach to life, and proposes some questions you can ask yourself to determine your values and what really matters in life.

Check it out. And breathe deep!

Learn more about the **Unbeatable Mind** program.

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4 COMMENTS

JEREMY
MARCH 20, 2019
There seems to be plenty of research out there supporting the use of controlled breathing techniques generally. But what research supports this "box breathing" method specifically? On what grounds does Neurohacker Collective advocate this technique over other techniques of controlled breathing?

JACQUELYN LOERA
Public Relations and Media
APRIL 08, 2019
Hi Jeremy. We agree that there are many effective techniques for breathing. This article simply highlights one of the many techniques that we like! For more information on box breathing from Mark Divine, see his website at <https://unbeatablemind.com/tag/box-breathing/>



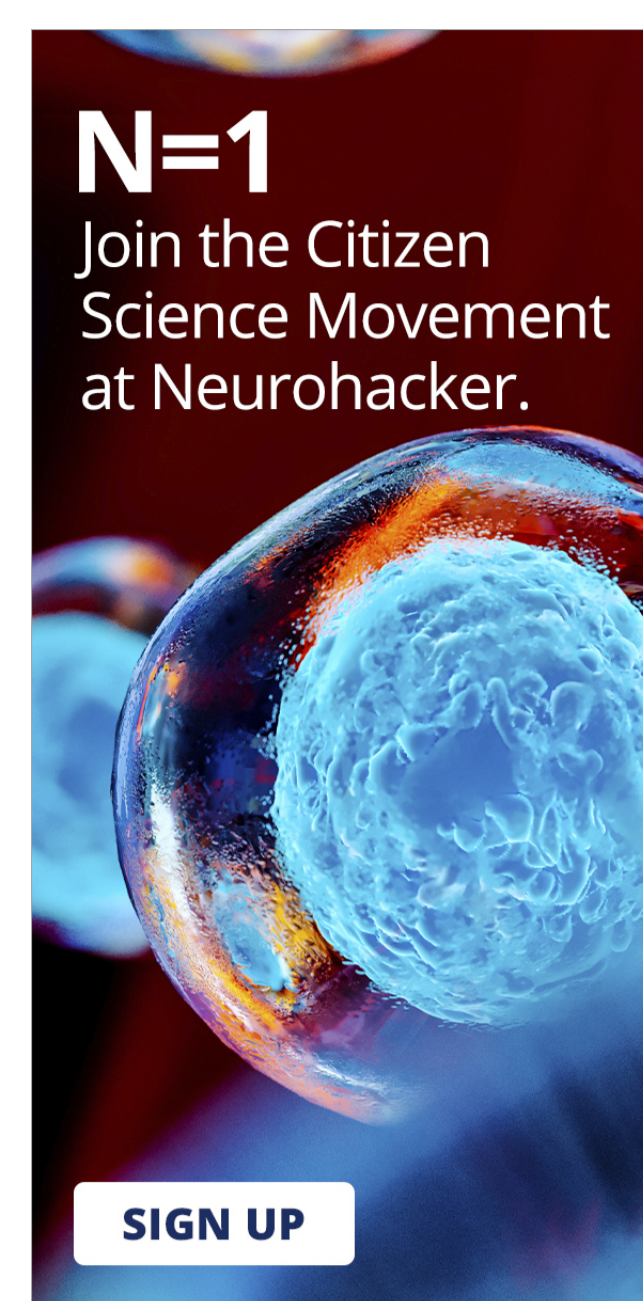
LISE
AUGUST 07, 2019
Reading Jeremy's question and Jacquelyn's answer checking out the suggested website I find no physiological studies to support the claim. There are a lot of different breathing techniques out there some of which are supported by scientific studies others not. Because one like one of the many techniques does not make it physiological correct. I acknowledge Mark Divine's extensive curriculum which does not include physiology. As breathing is very much what makes us alive it is an extremely important area in my view. What other techniques do you like?

TYLER BESSIRE
AUGUST 20, 2019
Hi Lise! So from what I have gathered from studying controlled breathing techniques is that as long as it stays rhythmic then the holds and counts are almost arbitrary. Your body just needs a repetitive cycle. 5 seconds in then hold for 2. 4 seconds out and hold for 3. So long as you keep the rhythm you started with, within about a minute you can actually see the physiology change. So I think Mark has it spot on here. As far as scientific proof there is a really awesome video on this exact subject by Dr Alan Watkins. It's called "Being Brilliant Every Single Day" and at a Ted Conference he monitors a persons heart rate before and after rhythmic breathing. In, Hold, Out, Hold. Same basic idea as Mark. Hope this was helpful! Have a great day

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4 Comments



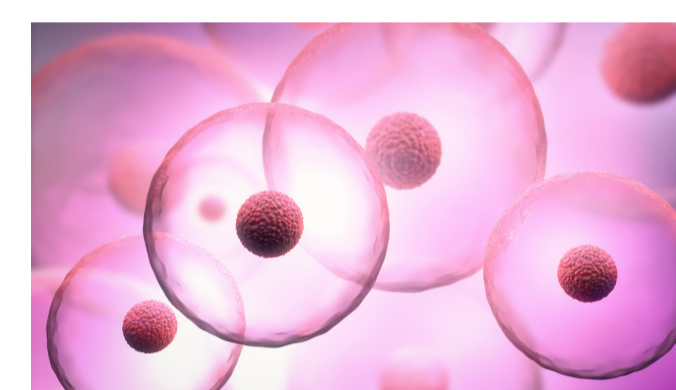
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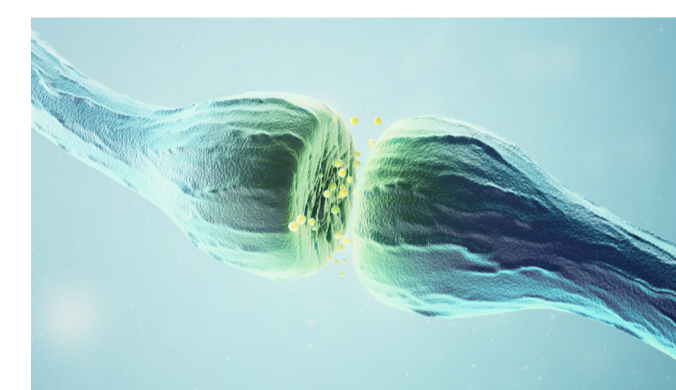
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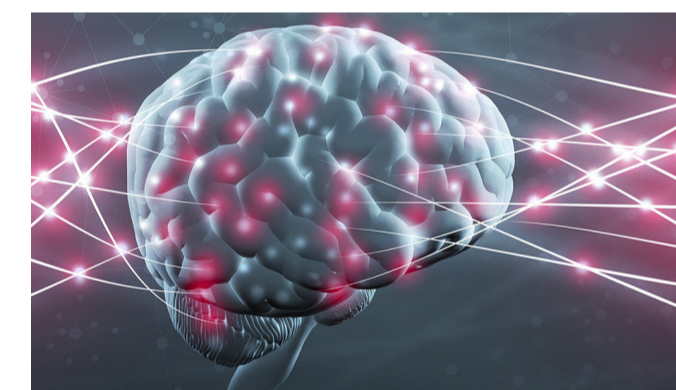
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WHAT IS DOPAMINE?



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