

# Soul Actions

In each issue we share a meditation, exercise or contemplation. Nevşah Karamehmet shares how breathwork can bring balance and emotional control

**H**ave you ever paid attention to how you breathe when you're happy, or when you're scared? Scientific studies show a strong correlation between our emotions and breathing habits. Emotions that make us feel good also bring about slow, deep breaths.

Heavier emotions like fear and anxiety cause us to switch to fast, shallow breathing. The interesting thing is that our emotions affect our breath as much as our breath affects our emotions.

In spiritual traditions and ancient Eastern practices, the breath is considered a channel of the energy of life, and the respect given to it goes back thousands of years. As a critical component of yoga, breath is the backbone of many meditative practices. That's why most breathing practices becoming mainstream now have their roots in ancient yogic traditions. Now, as science catches up with this ancient practice, we can clearly understand its psychological and physical effects on top of its spiritual effects, and see how we benefit from conscious breathing.

Breathwork can be used for therapeutic purposes. It can transform major conditions such as post-traumatic and anxiety disorders, chronic fatigue and attention deficit. Patients suffering from migraines, cerebral, coronary or bronchial conditions and more can benefit from a regular breathing practice.

The great thing about breathwork is that it can also benefit you instantly. A ten-minute breathing exercise in the middle of the day can recharge you, clear your mind and improve your focus. You can reach mental clarity, emotional control and balance brought on by body-mind integrity through breathwork. All of this makes it easier to manage stress, relieve tension and enjoy life.

When you are caught in a whirl of low-frequency emotions such as anger, fear, anxiety or sadness – when you feel you are losing your balance and control – bring your attention to your breathing by practising the following exercise. You will immediately feel the difference.



✦ **Nevşah Fidan Karamehmet is a breath expert and the founder of the Breath Hub app, which features sessions designed for relaxation, emotional control and balance. You can download it with a seven-day free trial.**  
✦ [breathhub.app](https://breathhub.app)

## BOX BREATHING TECHNIQUE

Box breathing is an effective, easy-to-learn technique that helps you go back to your natural breathing rhythm.

It reverses the stress response and relaxes the body and mind, easing emotional intensity and making it easier to return to your centre.

You can achieve control and balance by practising this technique at times of emotional intensity. Regular breathwork exercises may help you prevent emotional outbursts and make it easier to turn to specific techniques when you need them.

In box breathing, we inhale, hold the breath, exhale, and hold again for equal durations. Remember, the deeper and slower you breathe, the more beneficial and relaxing it will be. However, you may want to increase the time gradually to make the practice as comfortable as possible, especially the breath-holding stages. For example, you can start with four seconds and increase the time to five or six seconds as you get used to the technique. Using deep, diaphragmatic breathing during this practice will bring a much deeper relaxation.

### Sit in a comfortable position with your spine straight.

- Take a few deep, diaphragmatic breaths through your nose
- Focus on releasing the tension in your body and relaxing your muscles
- Take a deep breath through your nose for a count of four
- Hold your breath for a count of four. Observe your emotions non-judgementally
- Exhale through the mouth for a count of four, visualising all the intense emotions leaving your body with your breath
- Hold your breath again for a count of four. Focus on releasing the tension in your body a little bit more with each breath
- Take a deep breath again and continue the exercise for a few minutes ●