

# Wellness



# Breathwork for Balance

Breathing is something most people take for granted.

Yet a growing number of wellness programs are turning this basic function into a focused practice designed to reduce stress, improve mental clarity and support overall well-being. Known as breathwork, these techniques use controlled breathing patterns to influence the body's nervous system and emotional state.

## ANCIENT PRACTICE, MODERN APPEAL

Forms of breathwork have roots in yoga, meditation and traditional healing systems that date back thousands of years. In recent years, the practice has entered mainstream wellness as people seek accessible ways to manage stress.

One of the simplest techniques is box breathing, sometimes used by athletes and first responders to maintain calm in high-pressure situations. The method involves inhaling for four counts, holding the breath for four counts, exhaling for four counts, and pausing for four counts before beginning again. The pattern can be repeated for several minutes to create a sense of rhythm and stability.

Alternate nostril breathing, often taught in yoga classes, is another widely practiced technique. By closing one nostril at a time and breathing in a controlled sequence, practitioners aim to balance energy in the



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body and calm the mind. This method is said to help quiet racing thoughts and prepare the body for rest or meditation.

Holotropic breathwork, a more intensive approach developed in the 1970s, uses accelerated breathing patterns often paired with music to induce altered states of consciousness. Sessions typically take place in workshops guided by trained facilitators and are intended to promote self-exploration and emotional release.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS BENEFITS

Supporters of breathwork highlight benefits that include reduced anxiety, improved focus and better sleep. Some research suggests structured breathing exercises can lower blood pressure; ease symptoms of depression; and stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps the body relax.

Medical experts caution breathwork should not replace

professional care for serious conditions, but many agree it can be a helpful tool when practiced responsibly. Short daily sessions can be incorporated into morning routines, work breaks or pre-sleep rituals.

## GETTING STARTED

Unlike many wellness trends, breathwork requires no special equipment or membership. Beginners can start with just a few minutes a day, focusing on slow, even breaths. Numerous

online guides and classes are available, though many wellness centers and yoga studios offer in-person instruction.

For people seeking a low-cost, accessible way to manage stress and support emotional balance, breathwork provides an option that can be practiced anywhere. Whether through gentle daily exercises or more immersive sessions, intentional breathing demonstrates the power of a simple, natural act to restore calm and focus.



# IV Vitamins: Hype or Healthy?

Wellness lounges and med spas across the country now advertise IV vitamin drips as the latest shortcut to hydration, energy and immunity.

The treatments, once limited to hospitals for patients in need of fluids or nutrients, have become a popular elective option for people seeking a quick boost.

In 2024, the IV hydration therapy market was at \$2.64 billion, projected to grow to \$5.66 billion by 2033. Celebrity promotion and social media has helped to boost its popularity.

## WHAT THE DRIPS PROMISE

IV drips typically deliver a cocktail of fluids, electrolytes and vitamins directly into the bloodstream through an intravenous line. Depending on the provider, options may include high doses of vitamin C for immunity, B vitamins for energy or magnesium for muscle recovery. Some lounges also market specialty blends said to reduce jet lag, support skin health or relieve hangovers.

Proponents argue bypassing the digestive system allows nutrients to be absorbed more quickly and effectively. Sessions usually last 30-60 minutes and are administered in wellness clinics or mobile units that bring the service to homes and offices.



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## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE TREND

Medical experts caution while IV drips may improve hydration, evidence supporting broader claims is limited. For most healthy people, drinking water and maintaining a balanced diet provides sufficient hydration and nutrients. The body excretes excess vitamins, especially water-soluble ones like vitamin C, which means much of the supplementation may not be retained.

Doctors also warn there are health risks such as septic

shock, blood clots, overdose and allergic reactions. It's why the Mayo Clinic highlights most beneficial claims are unproven and it is more effective to stick with a nutritious diet and get adequate sleep.

That said, some individuals with medical conditions or nutrient deficiencies may benefit from intravenous therapy prescribed by a physician. Cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, for example, sometimes receive IV vitamin C to help with side effects. For the general population, the

treatments remain largely elective and cosmetic rather than medically necessary.

## SAFETY AND CONSIDERATIONS

IV drips are generally safe when administered by trained professionals in sterile conditions, but they are not without risks. Improper insertion of the IV can lead to infection or bruising, and people with certain health conditions may be advised to avoid high doses of particular vitamins.

Research providers carefully

and consult with a health care professional before starting treatment. Some states regulate IV therapy more strictly than others, so oversight can vary.

Despite questions about effectiveness, the popularity of IV vitamin drips shows no signs of slowing. For many, the experience offers a sense of luxury and self-care, whether or not the benefits extend beyond hydration. As with many wellness trends, the appeal may be as much about the ritual as the results.

# Massage Modalities

Massage has long been associated with relaxation, but today's spa and wellness centers offer a wide range of specialized techniques that go far beyond simple stress relief.

From deep tissue therapy to lymphatic drainage, each modality provides different benefits depending on individual needs and health goals.

## MORE THAN RELAXATION

Swedish massage is one of the most common forms, using long strokes and kneading to ease tension and improve circulation. It is often recommended for people new to massage because of its gentle, soothing style.

By contrast, deep tissue massage targets the inner layers of muscles and connective tissue. Practitioners use slower strokes and firm pressure to break up adhesions and knots, making this option useful for chronic pain, tight muscles or recovery after injury.

Sports massage incorporates stretching and targeted work on specific muscle groups to improve flexibility and support athletic performance. It is often used before or after competitions to prevent or treat muscle strain.



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## SPECIALIZED APPROACHES

Lymphatic drainage massage is a lighter technique designed to stimulate the body's lymphatic system, which helps remove waste and toxins. It is sometimes recommended for people recovering from surgery or experiencing swelling, as it can encourage fluid movement and reduce discomfort.

Hot stone massage uses heated stones placed on the body or integrated into the massage itself.

The warmth can ease muscle stiffness and promote deep relaxation.

Aromatherapy massage pairs touch with essential oils selected for their calming or invigorating properties. Reflexology focuses on pressure points in the feet, hands and ears, which are believed to correspond to different parts of the body.

Shiatsu and Thai massage, rooted in Eastern traditions, use pressure, stretching and movement to release tension and restore balance. Thai massage in particular involves active participation, with practitioners guiding clients through stretches while applying pressure along energy lines.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT STYLE

Selecting the best massage often depends on personal preferences and goals. Someone seeking stress relief after a busy workweek may find Swedish or aromatherapy massage ideal, while those with sports injuries might benefit from deep tissue or sports massage. People with medical conditions such as lymphedema or chronic swelling may want to explore lymphatic drainage, ideally under a doctor's guidance.

It is important to communicate openly with massage therapists about comfort levels, areas of concern and health

history. Most spas and wellness centers offer consultations to match clients with the right approach. It may also be possible to combine more than one modality. Aromatherapy is frequently an add-on to other types of massage. Some spas will offer a combination of Swedish and deep tissue, with the therapist alternating as needed.

With so many modalities available, massage has become a customizable tool for wellness. Whether the goal is relaxation, pain relief or improved athletic performance, there is likely a technique to suit anybody.



# Practicing Mindful Movement

Not all exercise is about building muscle or burning calories.

A growing number of people are turning to mindful movement practices such as Feldenkrais, the Alexander Technique and Tai Chi to improve mobility, reduce stress and build a stronger mind-body connection.

Mindful movement is considered a holistic or comprehensive approach. It combines physical, emotional and intellectual aspects into activity as a way of prompting well-being.

## A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO FITNESS

Unlike high-intensity workouts, mindful movement emphasizes awareness, posture and controlled motion. The Feldenkrais Method, developed by physicist Moshe Feldenkrais, uses gentle sequences of movement to retrain the nervous system and improve function. Practitioners say it promotes neuroplasticity and can help with flexibility, coordination and chronic pain relief.

The Alexander Technique, which originated in the late 19th century, teaches students how to release unnecessary tension and move with greater ease.

It is often used by actors, musicians and dancers to enhance performance, but it is also valued for its benefits in everyday activities such as



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sitting, walking and working at a desk.

Tai Chi, an ancient Chinese martial art, is sometimes described as “meditation in motion.” Practiced through slow, flowing movements, it has been linked to improvements in balance, stress reduction and overall well-being.

## BENEFITS FOR BODY AND MIND

Research suggests mindful movement practices can improve posture, reduce back

and neck pain, and support rehabilitation after injury. They are associated with lower stress levels, improved mood and better sleep. Because the movements are low impact, they are accessible to people of different ages and fitness levels.

Practitioners note mindful movement encourages participants to slow down and pay attention to how their bodies feel, creating a contrast to the fast pace of modern life. For many, the emphasis on awareness is as important as the

physical benefits.

## ACCESSIBLE PRACTICES

Classes in Feldenkrais and the Alexander Technique are available in many cities, often through wellness centers, physical therapy clinics or performing arts schools. Tai Chi is widely taught in community centers, senior programs and martial arts studios. Online tutorials have also made these practices more accessible, allowing beginners to experiment at home.

Mindful movement is not meant to replace more vigorous exercise, but rather to complement it. People may choose to add a weekly class or incorporate short daily sessions into their routine.

As interest in holistic health grows, mindful movement offers an alternative to traditional workouts by combining gentle motion with mental focus. For those seeking relief from stress or chronic tension, it provides a way to move with greater awareness and ease.



# Scalp Health and Hair Wellness

For many people, hair care begins and ends with shampoo and conditioner.

Yet stylists and wellness professionals emphasize a healthy scalp is the true foundation for strong, vibrant hair and it can play a surprising role in overall well-being.

## MORE THAN COSMETIC CARE

Scalp health has gained attention in recent years as salons and spas expand services beyond simple styling. Treatments such as scalp exfoliation, hydrating masks and specialized serums target dryness, oil buildup and irritation that can affect hair growth and texture.

Massage is another common approach. Gentle stimulation of the scalp is believed to increase blood circulation, which may promote healthier follicles. Beyond the potential hair benefits, massage can trigger relaxation and stress relief, similar to traditional body massage.

Some wellness centers combine scalp care with aromatherapy or hot oil treatments, blending beauty rituals with relaxation practices. These services often appeal to clients who want both improved hair health and a moment of calm.

## STRESS AND ITS EFFECTS

Stress can have a significant



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effect on hair, sometimes contributing to thinning or shedding. Conditions such as telogen effluvium — a temporary form of hair loss often triggered by stress, illness or major life events — highlight the connection between emotional health and scalp wellness.

Practitioners note regular scalp treatments can become part of a larger self-care routine. Taking time to slow down

and focus on personal grooming, they say, helps reinforce mindfulness and stress management. At-home practices such as gentle scalp brushing or using cooling scalp tonics can provide a similar sense of ritual.

## ACCESSIBLE WELLNESS

Scalp care no longer requires luxury spa visits. Drugstores and beauty retailers now offer products

marketed specifically for scalp health, from exfoliating scrubs to leave-in treatments. Dermatologists stress the importance of basic practices such as protecting the scalp from sun exposure, avoiding harsh chemicals and washing regularly with mild shampoos suited to individual hair types.

For many, the growing emphasis on scalp health is part of a larger cultural shift toward treating wellness as

holistic, where beauty, stress management and self-care are interconnected. A healthier scalp can contribute to better hair and to the overall sense of relaxation that comes from carving out time to care for oneself.

As one of the most visible parts of the body, hair may get the attention, but it all begins with the scalp. Nurturing it is a small but meaningful step toward greater wellness.



# The Healing Power of Sound

Step inside a sound bath and you may feel the vibrations before you hear them.

The deep resonance of a gong, the shimmering tones of a crystal bowl and the gentle hum of chimes create an immersive environment that many describe as deeply calming. What was once a niche practice has become a popular element in spas, yoga studios and wellness centers.

Sound healing draws on traditions thousands of years old, from Tibetan singing bowls to indigenous drumming. Today, practitioners combine those roots with modern techniques such as vibroacoustic therapy, where low-frequency sound waves are transmitted through special tables or chairs to promote relaxation and pain relief.

One of the most widely recognized forms is the gong bath, in which participants recline while a practitioner plays gongs and bowls in evolving patterns. The layered sounds and vibrations are designed to quiet racing thoughts and ease tension. Crystal singing bowls, often made of quartz, are tuned to specific notes that some practitioners believe correspond to energy centers in the body.

Advocates say these experiences can help reduce anxiety, support meditation and even improve sleep. While scientific research is



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still developing, several studies suggest that sound therapy may lower stress hormones, slow heart rates and enhance overall well-being. Many participants simply describe leaving a session feeling lighter, calmer and more centered.

Spas and wellness centers increasingly offer group and private sound healing sessions. Some combine them

with yoga or massage for a multi-sensory approach to self-care. Vibroacoustic therapy has gained traction in clinical settings, where it is sometimes used as a complementary method for people dealing with chronic pain or neurological conditions.

Part of the appeal lies in the accessibility. Unlike fitness classes or complicated wellness regimens, sound healing

requires no special equipment or prior experience. Most sessions involve little more than lying down, closing your eyes and letting the waves of sound wash over you.

Practitioners emphasize sound healing is not a replacement for medical treatment, but rather a supportive practice that can fit into a broader wellness plan. For those looking to

disconnect from the noise of daily life and reconnect with a sense of inner calm, it offers a noninvasive choice that is as much about listening as it is about feeling.

Whether experienced in a spa, a yoga studio or even at home with a single bowl, sound healing provides a reminder that sometimes the simplest vibrations can bring the deepest peace.



# Wellness For Men

For decades, wellness routines like spa visits, yoga classes and skincare regimens were often marketed to women.

Today, more men are stepping into those spaces, challenging stereotypes and redefining what self-care looks like.

In 2019, the International SPA Association reported that 49% of U.S. spa-goers are men. Spabreaks.com said there has been a 346% increase between 2018 and 2023 of men booking spa treatments and experiences.

## CHANGING BELIEFS

Wellness professionals note men once viewed practices such as facials or yoga as indulgent or unmanly. That perception is shifting as younger generations embrace a broader definition of health and reject many old gender stereotypes. Gyms now advertise recovery services, spas highlight treatments for men and yoga studios attract participants seeking both flexibility and stress relief.

Industry reports show steady growth in male participation across the wellness sector. Men are booking massage and skincare services more often, and products such as beard oils and moisturizers are now staples in retail stores. Wellness tourism is also expanding, with resorts and retreats tailoring programs



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for men who want to balance physical activity with restorative practices.

## BENEFITS BEYOND THE SURFACE

Engaging in self-care offers benefits that extend well beyond appearance. Regular massage can reduce muscle tension and support athletic performance. Yoga and mindfulness practices can help lower stress, improve sleep and boost overall mental health. Skincare routines, long dismissed by some men as

cosmetic, can prevent issues such as razor burn, dryness and premature aging.

Wellness experts emphasize men who adopt these practices often experience better productivity, improved mood and stronger resilience in daily life. By normalizing routines once considered off-limits, the wellness industry is helping dismantle stigma while supporting healthier lifestyles.

## ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY

Many wellness centers are adapting their offerings to be

more welcoming to male clients. Spas now feature neutral design and menu options geared toward men's needs, such as deep tissue massage for sports recovery or facials that address shaving-related concerns. Fitness centers and yoga studios promote inclusivity, highlighting strength, mobility and stress management rather than appearance alone.

Workplace wellness programs also play a role by normalizing stress-reduction techniques and encouraging

employees of all genders to participate. Online platforms have further expanded access, giving men the opportunity to explore practices privately before stepping into group settings.

The shift toward wellness for men reflects broader cultural changes in attitudes about masculinity and self-care. As more men embrace the idea that health involves both body and mind, the industry is responding with services designed to meet them where they are.