

A Journey in Breath

30-Day Badass Breathing Routine

By

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A Journey in Breath

30-Day Badass Breathing Routine

Thank you for your interest in becoming a badass breather. If you've already read my book, *A Journey in Breath*, then you are already aware that the goal of the book and that of the Bad to Badass series is to help you build a framework that allows you to create a unique program for yourself that can be customized to meet your individual needs and goals. You can then evolve this program as you progress. With that said, I know it is often helpful to follow someone else's lead, learn from the programs they have developed, and then take what works for you to create your own system and routine. That is the intent of the content that follows.

What you will find below is an example of a 30-day breathing routine that I have followed. I change my routines often and evolve them as I advance and learn more. To make this easier to digest I recorded my breathing practices for a month and then organized them for you. Many of the breathing exercises I do day-to-day are repetitive especially those that I do in the morning because it is a routine that ensures that I get the most important and foundational breathwork done first thing. The other routines throughout the day will vary based on workout schedule and other factors. I've included all of that below.

This content assumes that you have read, *A Journey in Breath*, therefore I will reference the chapters that contain the exercise so that you can easily find them. As my routines continually evolve I also include exercises that may not be in the book. When that is the case I will explain them in detail below.

For pictures and videos and additional content for these exercises please visit: www.badtobadass.com/additionalresources

Let's get started.

Day 1

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

Wim Hof Method for 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 1 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*)

I prefer to get my body moving as soon as possible in the morning so after performing the Wim Hof Method I will go into a series of dynamic stretches with yoga like movements to get my whole body stretched out and the blood flowing.

I perform the warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets. Set 1 starts with my right leg forward for the warrior 1 twists then moves directly into downward dog and chaturanga. Set 2 then begins with my left leg forward.

During these exercises I will hold the various positions for a 2-3 full breathing cycles expanding my midsection and then hollowing out to get a better rotation on the twist or deeper stretch of the hips and back on the downward dog and chaturanga. My version of chaturanga is slightly modified as I will stay on my toes with my knees hovering slightly above the floor. This allows for a deeper stretch of the hips and the weight of your torso can then aid in expanding the rib cage and chest for better diaphragmatic breathing.

I then move to **bundled breathing with air squats** using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*). Inhale for 1 full repetition (lower and come back to standing), exhale for 1 full repetition, inhale for 2 repetitions, exhale for 2 repetitions, inhale for 3 repetitions, exhale for 3 repetitions, empty lung breath hold for 1 repetition. Now pyramid back down. Inhale for 2 repetitions, exhale for 2 repetitions, inhale for 1 repetition, exhale for 1 repetition. Done.

3 sets of breath hold burpees with 10 recovery breaths in between. Do as many burpees as you can during the hold. Exhale fully, hold, and then begin to do your burpees. Stop when you have to take a breath, take 10 recovery breaths while walking, exhale, go again, repeat.

To summarize:

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 1 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*)
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Breath hold burpees (empty lung holds) with 10 recover breaths for 3 sets

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

My goal is to perform some type of relaxing breathwork before I eat my first meal which can vary based on schedule but is usually around 11:30 before eating at noon.

Box Breathing for 15 minutes (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*)

Warmup/Workout/Cool down: Time varies based on work schedule but usually between 3 and 6PM

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds to oxygenate the body and prepare it for a workout.

Warmup sets – For many warm up sets with submaximal weight I will perform a breath hold with exercise where my core will not be compromised such as air squats, pullups, pushups etc. I tend to warmup with no weight so this method works well. Then I do a warmup set or series of warmup sets with weight for that exercise before starting the working sets. Once I add weight I do not perform breath holds except as they naturally occur for proper breathing form for a particular exercise.

- **1 set of air squats with breath holds** – exhale begin to squat, when you need to breathe take in 2 recovery breaths as you continue to squat, exhale, hold and continue to squat until you have to breathe. That is the end of the warmup.
- Barbell squat warmup (no breath holds) 135x5, set 2 205x5, followed by working sets.
- Rest of workout ...

Breathing Exercise and Cool Down

- Counting exhale exercise for 6 cycles (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)
- Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*)

Day 2

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 2 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*)
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Halfway Change Breath with pushups* (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

*My morning routine is not a workout where I am taxing my muscles. I only want to get the blood flowing and get in some breathwork. Therefore, any exercise I do is not to failure. I keep the rep count such that I am relaxed during the entire set.

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

Box Breathing for 15 minutes followed by 3 Long inhale/exhale cycles (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*)

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

***Note** – Today's workout is a high intensity interval training (HIIT) workout consisting of different muscle movement, kettlebells, assault ropes, etc. Therefore, my warmup is designed to get my

whole body, including my diaphragm and lungs warmed up as this is both a light resistance and cardio type workout. I will not describe the details of the workout here. However, for each workout routine I will define whether or not it is a Strength/Power workout, a HIIT, or Cardiovascular workout. My warmups will typically be modified slightly based on the type of workout. In each case I am not going to failure in these warmup exercises I am using the breathwork purely to aid in getting my body prepared for the workout itself.

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Stretch-your-breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

- Perform one set of air squats starting with a count of five and adding one count for each repetition to a count of 10 and then pyramid back down to five.
- Perform one set of pushup starting with a count of one and adding one count for each repetition to a count of seven then pyramid back down to one.
- Perform one set of pull-ups starting with a count of one and adding one count for each repetition to a count of four then pyramid back down to one.

Workout

HIIT Workout – 45-60 minutes

Towards end of workout I will perform a series of hypoxic training sets (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)

One for One (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)

Perform chin ups with a one for one breathing pattern starting with one and working up to five. Exhale, perform one repetition with empty lungs, take one recovery breath. After the exhale perform two repetitions with empty lungs, take two recovery breaths . . . Perform five empty lung repetitions, with five recovery breaths and then pyramid back down to one repetition and then breathe normally.

Hypoxic Burpees

Start with empty lung breath holds and perform as many burpees and possible without taking a breath. Take a breath when you have to but continue to do burpees up to a count of 10. That is one set. Do three sets.

Cool Down

Feel the pulse (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*).

Day 3

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 3 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*)
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Five minute on an assault bike with a training mask (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*).

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

- **15 minutes of Slower and Less** – The Silent, Slow Breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)
- **Three sets of Breath-Hold Diaphragm Activation** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Tension wave (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*) 2-3 minutes varying the patterns of the wave.

Slow Motion with burst breathing (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*) using air squats. Repetition 1 to a count of 20, Repetition 2 to a count of 30, Repetition 3 to a count of 40.

Workout

Power lifting workout. No specific breathwork done during the workout.

Cool Down

Body Segment Breathing (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*) I find this to be a good exercise to relax any tight muscles or joints. I will breath in and out various muscle group and/or joints. Breathe in through my abdomen out my back for 5-10 breathing cycles. In through my right thigh out through my hamstring. In through my left thigh out through my hamstring. In through the front of my neck, out through the back of my neck. I will do this for 5-10 minutes.

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*). As you can see this is a staple of mine. It is one of my favorites for restoring my resting heart rate which improves recovery time.

Day 4

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 2 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*) bundled with advanced technique 4 to add some visualization/meditation practice.
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Burpees with a training mask (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*). I start with the most difficult setting on the mask. Because this is the morning exercise I will typically do these to an exact count instead of training till absolute failure. With that in mind I start with the mask at the most difficult setting and perform all repetitions without a rest in between. I start with 10 burpees in the most difficult position, click the mask down 2 steps and do 10 burpees, another 2 settings down on the mask and do another 10 burpees, etc. I will do this till I reach 60 burpees. Depending on how many mask settings your training mask has you may be at the easiest setting after 3 or 4 clicks. If that is the case just continue to do burpees on that setting until you reach your target rep count or remove the mask entirely if breathing becomes too difficult.

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

- **15 minutes of Slower and Less** – The Silent, Slow Breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)
- **The heel grab back bend** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*) – 3 Sets with 5 breaths per set.

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Workout (Breathwork Focus)

This is the breathing workout for the week with 30-40 minutes focused solely on breathwork. I usually start the breathwork session with some form of hypoxic training that is not too intense. Then move to an intense exercise and finish with a series of less intense breathwork exercises, followed by the cooldown.

Increasing Breath Holds During Activity (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*) – I start with a slow walk taking 10 circumferential breaths through my nose. On the 10th breath I fully exhale and continue walking for 10 steps with breath held. Take one deep breath, then 7 small flickers of air through

your nose where the air barely fills your nostrils. This is the patterns to follow for the remaining cycles. I will increase the number of steps by 10 for each of the empty lung breath holds on each cycle, however, the 10 recovery breaths, and 7 flickers of air through my nose remain a constant. When I get to 40 steps on the empty lung breath hold, I will then start to jog on the next cycle. At this point I don't always count steps. I usually go by distance. Reach the first tree on cycle one of running, reach the next tree on the next cycle, and so on. Find what works for you. The goal is to increase the distance you jog on each successive set. I will usually do 3-5 cycles of jogging before ending this exercise.

Wind Sprints (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*) – 3-10 Sets. I use the most difficult setting on the training mask for the sprint which is approximately 50 yards. I go at a full run, taking in usually only one or two breaths during the sprint. At the finish I click the mask down two settings and then fast walk back to the start line while taking my recovery breaths. As soon as I get back to the starting line I put the mask back to the maximum resistance setting and start the next set. Rinse. Wash. Repeat for as many cycles as you can handle.

The All-Together Exercise (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*) This is that chaotic exercise in which you take all the exercises from your catalog and put them together. Think of this as high intensity breathwork training. Change the physical movements you are doing while changing the breathing patterns with the goal of constant motion. During any of these patterns or movements add random (as random as possible) breath holds. Suggestions for randomness: work with a friend that will just say hold and then breathe when the hold is over. Find a song with a repetitive pattern and any time a lyric or the refrain comes up perform a breath hold. As a short example of what this would look like. Perform 5 air squats with a halfway-change breath. Go right into a plank and start doing pushups using stretch your breath. Hold. Continue to do pushups with the same cadence during the hold. Breathe. Start doing burpees with a 1 for 1 ratio. 1 burpee with breath held, 1 recover breath, 2 burpees with breath held, 1 recovery breath and then hold during the second recovery breath. Walk to a pull up bar. Hold. Breathe in. Breathe out. 3 pullups with empty lung breath hold, etc...

You can pull from your entire bag of tricks and continue to refine. I try to make this so that it never feels like I'm doing the exact same sequence from week to week.

I always end this with the **feel the pulse exercise** to get my heart rate back to resting.

The Exhale Count (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*)

Cool Down

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*).

Day 5

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 1 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*) bundled with advanced technique 4 to add some visualization/meditation practice.
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. 5 sets of hypoxic pushups. Perform as many pushups as you can with an empty lung breath hold. When you have to breathe stop. That is 1 set. Take 10 deep and full recovery breaths. Then do the next set till you complete 5 sets following the same pattern.
5. 5 sets of hypoxic pull-ups using the same pattern used to perform the hypoxic pushups.

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

- **15 minutes of Slower and Less** – The Silent, Slow Breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)
- **Breath-Hold Diaphragm Activation** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*) – 5 sets.

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

The Quick Freeze (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*) – I do the whole body version of this exercise for warmups. Tensing the whole body on inhale and relaxing on exhale. I follow this pattern for 10 breaths and then reverse the pattern relaxing on inhale and tensing on exhale. I usually save the more advanced form of this exercise with segmented tension in certain parts of the body for breathwork focused workouts or cool down.

Workout

Strength training workout. No breathwork during the workout.

Exhale count exercise (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*) at the end of the workout for 5 sets before going into the cooldown.

Cool down

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*).

Day 6

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 3 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*) bundled with advanced technique 4 to add some visualization/meditation practice.
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Quick Freeze [Segmented Tension] (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*) – Tense your entire body with the exception of a specific area. This could be as small as a toe/finger or as large as your arm/leg/abdomen and anything in between. I have worked with some people where it is easier to keep a leg relaxed while tensing everything else. While others prefer to start small; keeping a toe relaxed while the rest of their body is tense. Fool around with different body parts and patterns. This is an advanced movement so don't get discouraged if you don't get it the first few times out. Keep practicing. I will usually do this for 10-15 minutes.

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

This is a mini-breathwork workout (10-20 minutes). At times I will do this after a workout or after the morning routine. Today I decided to do it in the late morning because I had the time. You can perform this 10-20 minute routine whenever it is most convenient for you but preferable at a time you are not completely exhausted from a workout.

Training Mask Breath holds and quick breaths – This is a new one since writing, *A Journey in Breath*. As I started Jiu Jitsu training I noticed that I needed to strengthen my breathing for the type of stress that live rolls put on my diaphragm and lungs. There are many cases in which you may not be able to breathe followed by a second or two where you can grab a few quick breaths. In order to re-create this pattern I use a training mask set to the most difficult setting. I will occasionally use my mouth during this exercise as my air hunger grows but I will start out with nasal breathing.

Place the mask on the most difficult setting. Take in a few sharp breaths as quickly as possible followed by a breath hold. This does not have to be a maximum breath hold. Try to keep the timing, breathing reps, and hold times as random as possible. I will also do this while walking. Picture a scenario in your mind in which your breathing is disrupted, swimming under waves, jiu jitsu, wrestling, etc.. You get a second to breathe. Take in a quick breath. Hold. Breathe 3-5 breaths this time. Hold for a longer count this time. Quick breath. Continue this till you find that your air hunger reaches a point that you have to use your mouth. Do a few more breath hold

patterns with your mouth. I usually do this for a minimum of 5 minutes (this is the length of one live roll round at the school I train at). If you want to really recreate live scenarios you could then take a 1 minute break and then start again for another round of 5 minutes and follow this pattern for 3-5 sets. Your lungs will be burning.

*One thing to take away from this exercise is that of training specificity. If you are training for a specific sport or activity, determine what the optimal breathing pattern is for that activity and try to recreate it in a breathwork routine. This allows you to focus purely on optimizing your breathing pattern without the distraction of performing the movement. When doing this your focus on the breath will create lung and diaphragm “muscle memory” that can then transfer to your actual performance of the activity. Then use this pattern while performing the activity. Once you reach this “muscle memory” zone for your breath you will be able to perform the activity with the confidence of knowing that your breathing is optimal and your performance will increase as a result.

Box Breathing for 15 minutes followed by 3 Long inhale/exhale cycles (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*)

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Workout

Strength training workout. No breathwork during the workout.

At the end of the workout performed the **exhale count exercise** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*) for 5 sets before going into the cool down.

Cool down

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*).

Day 7

*This is the morning that I typically go Mountain Biking. We hit the trail at 6:30am sharp even if below zero and dark. For this reason I modify my morning routine. I also do not do any additional breathwork with the exception of maybe doing some meditative box breathing once I finally get home from the ride. Sunday is typically a light day after biking.

Morning Routine: 5:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 3 (*A Journey in Breath, Chapter 1*)

Warmup

I will usually do some nasal humming in the car on the way to the trails. By the time I meet my friends for the ride I'm already warmed up and primed.

Workout

8-20 mile mountain bike ride. Depends on conditions, the types of trails we do, and any time constraints the participants may have.

Cool down

When I get home I'll usually get in an ice bath and then sit out in the sun to dry up and warm up. During this time I will typically practice box breathing while listening to music and soaking up some rays.

Week 2

Day 8

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 3 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*) bundled with advanced technique 4 to add some visualization/meditation practice.
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Stretch your breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*) for 2 sets of pushups.

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

- **The heel grab back bend** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*) – 3 Sets with 5 breaths per set.
- **Box Breathing** for 15 minutes (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*).

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Workout

Depending on how rigorous the mountain bike ride on Day 7 (Sunday) was, Monday is usually my recovery day. However, there are times when I don't get a chance to work out Saturday due to family events which means that at times I will work out on Mondays. This week I did workout Saturday, therefore, Monday becomes an active recovery day. This usually consists of taking the dogs for a 3-5 mile trail walk with me wearing a 25-50lbs. ruck. That is the only work I will do on recovery day. If my legs are particularly spent I will still do the walk but leave the ruck at home.

Day 9

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 2 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*)
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Halfway Change Breath with pushups (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

- **15 minutes of Slower and Less – The Silent, Slow Breath** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)
- **Breath-Hold Diaphragm Activation** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*) – 5 sets.

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Workout

***Power lifting workout** – no breathwork specific exercises during the workout

Cool down

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*).

*If I was able to work out on Day 8 then Day 9 becomes an active recovery day. However, I always go to Jiu Jitsu class on Day 9. Therefore, if I am doing a power lifting workout on Day 9 it typically occurs earlier in the day. In fact, it would usually occur right after the morning routine to give my body some time to recover before my evening Jiu Jitsu class. I go to class 2 other times during the week but those days and times vary based on my work schedule, family schedule, etc. But day 9 is always a guarantee. Therefore, if anything has to be sacrificed it will be the powerlifting workout on day 9 which will move to day 10.

Note about training flexibility and discipline

Your workouts and your breathwork should be integrated into your life and be flexible the way life needs to be flexible. That does not mean you should not be disciplined or give yourself the room to make excuses. I have a certain number of workouts, breathwork sessions, and jiu jitsu classes that I must do in a week. As long as I seem to be adequately recovering I get those workouts in no matter what. However, I may have to move some of them around. If you hold yourself accountable you will progress. That is how you build discipline. Discipline is not built by saying no to your responsibilities or to your family. With the increase in focus and energy that results from exercise and breathwork I find I have more time instead of less because I'm more often performing optimally and can get things done much faster. Always remember your goals both for life and for your breathing, exercise and nutrition. That is the best way to make sure you are disciplined and stay on your chosen path.

Day 10

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 1 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*)
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Halfway Change Breath with pushups (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

- **15 minutes of Slower and Less – The Silent, Slow Breath** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)
- **Breath-Hold Diaphragm Activation** (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*) – 5 sets.

Targets of Opportunity for Breathwork

This is one of those cases where I was able to creatively add some breathwork into my daily routine. At the time of this writing it is February in New Jersey. Either before or after my *Morning Routine* I take an ice bath for 5 minutes. My ice bath takes place in a 150 gallon fiberglass tub

that sits out on my deck. I use mother nature to provide the ice. At the end of October nights are usually cold enough to provide water temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and by the time December rolls around the water is consistently at or below freezing.

Do I do any breathwork during my 5 minute cold water submersion? I'm glad you asked. Yes, I do. It helps to keep the cold at bay or at least keeps me from focusing on it. I always do the same breathing exercises during this time. I start with an extended inhale/exhale count. I breathe in as slowly as possible using my diaphragm to control the breath. I then exhale out to the same count. For example this morning I did a symmetrical inhale/exhale to a count of 15. I then perform one full breath and then inhale/exhale only enough to fill my nose, tiny flickers of air, using my diaphragm to control the inhale/exhale volume and speed. I will then take two full recovery breaths and then do another extended inhale/exhale but this time I will try to increase the count. One breath. Flickers of air through my nose and try to increase the count over my previous count. I usually try to match the inhale/exhale count. For example on set 1 I did 15 nose flickers and on set two I tried to do 20 to match my inhale/exhale count. I will continue this pattern until my 5 minutes are up.

Being that this tub is not filtered I have to drain it and refill it every 10-14 days. This is where the target of opportunity comes in. You heard me talk about using straws in *A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*. This is a great diaphragm and pace training tool. Well after I empty and fill the tub I have 50 feet of garden hose that I now need to drain. Usually I would simply roll the hose and lift each section higher than the last to get it to drain. This time I had the idea to blow through the hose to see if I could drain it with my breath. I did not unroll the hose all the way and instead just put one end on the ground and breathed through the other using my diaphragm to push air forcefully down the hose.

When compared with the straw this is more of a strength and endurance test of diaphragm strength. The straw has a much narrower tube to force air down so it is like a powerlifting workout for your diaphragm where you are trying to deflate your diaphragm quickly and forcefully. With the hose it feels more like a strength workout like doing 5-7 reps of squats. You have to push hard to force the water out of the hose, however, you also have to increase the length of your exhale because as more and more water is forced out of the hose you must fill the hose with air before you can push out any water. It took me 7 repetitions before all the water was drained from the hose. I took one huge inhale, put my mouth around the hose and then forced all the air from my lungs using my diaphragms as the driver for the exhale. When I could no longer push out any more air I would take one huge inhale in and then push again. This became a great workout and I plan on continuing to use this method going forward to drain the garden hose.

You can always search for similar types of scenarios as targets of opportunity for adding in some breathwork. What is great about these opportunities is that they increase your breath training without adding time to your day. In this case I had to drain the hose anyway and in fact using this method was faster than my previous method of using gravity. This method actually did a better job of getting all the water out. In, *A Journey in Breath*, I also described how I will wear a training

mask for performing mundane activities like mowing the lawn. This is another way to stack training atop normal daily or weekly activities that can go a long way to leveling up your breathing.

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (Journey in Breath, Chapter 6)

Halfway change breath with pullups

Hypoxic set of pushups. Empty breath hold for as many pushups as possible. 2 recovery breaths while continuing to perform pushups followed by another empty breath hold with as many pushups as I can do with empty lungs. End of set.

Workout

HIIT style workout with 5 minute rounds. I set a timer for five minutes and do a minimum of 5 rounds with a 1 minute rest between rounds. This is an attempt to mimic the cardio and muscular endurance I need for Jiu Jitsu. As a result I often do quite a few muscle endurance type activities. To balance out my endurance I do not do the same exercises each round or each workout with the exception of the Kettle Bells. However, I will change the weight and rep scheme for the Kettlebell portion of the workout as well.

For example:

Interval 1

Kettle Bells:

Kettlebell alternating single arm swing for 6 reps

Kettlebell clean and jerk alternating arms for 6 reps (right arm clean and jerk, kettlebell swing to left hand, clean and jerk, repeat for 6 cycles)

Kettlebell snatch alternating arms for 6 reps (same pattern as for clean and jerk)

Kettlebell clean alternating arms for 6 reps

Note: This is one continuous set. I never put the kettlebell down. I use the swings to alternate arms. This usually takes about 3 minutes.

Battle ropes:

Alternate arm waves for 50 reps each arm

Double arm wave for 20 reps

Farmers walk

I have two cement filled buckets with oversized 2 inch diameter handles. I carry for as long as possible.

Burpees

If there is any time remaining I will do burpees until I reach the five minute mark.

One minute Rest

Interval 2

Will use different exercises from Interval 1

I will constantly move throughout the intervals. This is where I will use pushups, pullups, chin ups and between sets of these I will do box jumps, air squats, burpees, etc.

Add 50lb slam ball exercises and 150lb slam ball for lifts over the shoulder.

Bear Crawls

Lunges

Sled pulls

Etc....

One minute Rest

Intervals 3 - 5

I rarely use a mask during this type of workout because I am trying to get the max out of my muscles. This is a combined cardio and muscular endurance workout and as such I don't want to limit my breathing. However, if I need to crank down the intensity and volume I will use the mask at a minimum setting and perform less intense exercises for fewer number of intervals but I always keep the intervals to 5 minutes with one minute of rest keeping the mask on for the whole workout.

I do, however, try to only use nose breathing during the workout. I tend to use my mouth to breathe as I get deeper into the kettlebell swings and I have found I cannot inhale fast enough to maintain core stability towards the middle to end of the kettlebell section.

Cool down

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath, Chapter 2*).

Day 11

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 1 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*)
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)
4. Halfway Change Breath with pushups (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

- **Box Breathing** for 15 minutes (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*)
- **Straw Breathing** – 5 sets of 5 breaths. (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*)
I use two bendy straws connected or taped together. If I can get five breaths easily then I will bend the straws until the configuration is such that getting five reps is exhausting for my diaphragm.

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Workout

Strength Training workout – no breathwork specific exercises during the workout.

At the end of this workout I performed 10-20 minutes of breathwork.

The heel grab back bend (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*) - 3 Sets of 5 breaths each.

The exhale count (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*)

Body-Segment Breathing (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Feel the Pulse (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Cool down

15 minutes of Slower and Less – The Silent, Slow Breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)

Day 12

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 1 (*A Journey in Breath, Chapter 1*) bundled with advanced technique 4 to add some visualization/meditation practice.
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath, Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath, Chapter 6*)

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

30 minutes of slower and less with a training mask – The Silent, Slow Breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*). You can do this while reading, working, watching TV. Up to you. The goal is to put the mask at a difficult setting and breath so slowly that you cannot hear yourself breathe. The mask amplifies the sound of you breathing so you will have to breathe slower in order to achieve silence.

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Workout (Breathwork Focus)

This is the breathing workout for this week. 30-40 minutes focused on breathwork.

This workout follows a similar pattern as last week's. I start with some form of less intense hypoxic training, move into more intense exercises and then end with a series of less intense breathwork exercises, concluding with the cool down. Although the pattern may be similar I attempt to do different exercises each week with the exception of the all-together exercise. The reason for this is to ensure that I am working out all my breathing muscles while also ensuring balanced blood PH, and decreasing sensitivity to CO₂. As the all-together exercise combines all these components and is chaotic and different each time by design, I always include it.

Hypoxic Training (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)

For this week I used both a mask and a plate carrier. I will modify the settings on the mask throughout the exercise to ensure I make breathing as difficult as possible. I want to get to the point where towards the end of each set I'm forced to use mouth breathing. For the first few sets I may be able to stick with nose breathing but after that I will need to use mouth breathing. Between sets rest until you can go back to nose breathing and then start your next set.

The plate carrier was loaded with 2 x 11 pound plates. One in front. One in back. I cinch the belt around my diaphragm tight enough that breathing while resting is slightly uncomfortable.

Assault Bike (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*)

5 Minutes using the following mask settings and cadence:

Cycle at a moderate pace for 75 seconds. At this point (without stopping), click down two settings on the mask or from high resistance to a medium resistance. Keeping the same pace, continue on this setting for 45 seconds. You should now be at the two-minute mark. Click the mask back to the difficult setting for 15 seconds and then decrease the resistance two clicks (or to medium depending on your mask settings) for 45 seconds. Perform this same pattern with the same settings for five minutes keeping a constant pace.

Around the second half of the exercise I will be forced to use mouth breathing. Your results may vary but stick with nose breathing until you feel you cannot continue without opening your mouth. If you did not need to use mouth breathing to complete the 5 minutes add resistance by increasing the setting on the mask and/or increase the cadence or increase the amount of time the mask stays in the more difficult settings. For example you can keep the mask at the more difficult setting for 20 seconds with only 40 seconds at the decreased setting.

1 Minute of Rest, or until nose breathing can be restored and then repeat the cycle for another 5 minutes.

This exercise and the next are focused on increasing the capacity and strength of your diaphragm which is why I used the plate carrier. As you are hunched over it is easier to breathe through the sides and back of your diaphragm. This exercise will force you to use the correct breathing pattern and location in order to optimize your breath. The exercise was designed specifically to make it difficult to complete if not optimizing breathing location and pace.

Burpees (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*) 1 Set

This one is rough especially with the plate carrier. Start with the mask on the maximum setting and continue to do burpees until breathing becomes a real struggle. At this point click down to an easier setting on the mask. On my mask I use 2 clicks of lesser resistance. Continue to do burpees until you reach the struggling point or until you feel you need to breathe through your mouth. Another 2 clicks to lessen the resistance. I continue this pattern until I've gone through all the settings on the mask. If your muscles can still do burpees but your breathing cannot keep up switch to mouth breathing to pull in the extra air to get in a good diaphragm workout.

During this exercise try to focus on pulling air using your diaphragm to control the flow and which parts of your diaphragm you are breathing through. Because this is a multistage movement breathing will be easier through certain parts of your diaphragm during different stages of the movement. At standing you can use a 360 degree breath. As you go to plank and pushup you will use your belly. As you bring your legs forward to a squat and then stand and jump pressure is put on your belly and you may find it easier to inflate your diaphragm from the back and/or sides. This is a great diaphragm workout as the plate carrier puts pressure on your diaphragm forcing you to optimize your breathing patterns.

One for One (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 8*)

Start with the mask at a difficult setting in which breathing through your nose is a struggle at rest.

1 Set of pushups

Perform a single pushup with an empty lung breath hold. Staying planked at the top of the pushup take one recovery breath. Then do two pushups with an empty lung breath hold. Staying planked take two recovery breaths. Pyramid up to a number where you then have to use mouth breathing. Once you start mouth breathing pyramid back down to one pushup with an empty lung breath hold and one recovery breath.

Because you are still using the plate carrier you will feel pressure on your diaphragm. This is another exercise where you can work on optimizing which parts of your diaphragm you breathe through during the full execution of the exercise.

1 Set of pull ups using the same pattern as above.

*At this stage I take off the plate carrier and the mask to perform the All-Together Exercise

The All-Together Exercise (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Try to pull from all the exercises that allow for dynamic movement and add intermittent breath holds. The more comfortable you get with the individual exercises the more you will be able to incorporate them into this routine in a creative and dynamic manner. Exercises like the quick freeze, tension wave, or body segment breathing may be difficult to incorporate to start but as you become more practiced you may be able to breath in through your left arm then out your right while performing pullups or pushups then when done with the set move quickly into a tension wave followed by a quick freeze.

As you advance on this breathing journey, the goal of this exercise should be to incorporate as many different patterns and movements as possible. That does not mean you have to put them all into one session but that they become part of your all-together exercise toolbelt which will allow for increasing creativity and diversification when performing this routine. This will result in strengthening and improving all aspects of your breathing.

As is customary I finish this sequence with the feel the pulse exercise to get my heart rate back to resting.

The Exhale Count (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*)

Cool Down

Box Breathing with legs resting on a bench to create neutral spine. Do this until resting heartrate is restored (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*).

Day 13

Morning Routine: 6:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 3 (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 1*) bundled with advanced technique 4 to add some visualization/meditation practice.
2. Warrior 1 twist (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 3*), downward dog and chaturanga for 2 sets.
3. Bundled breathing with air squats using a pyramid scheme (*A Journey in Breath, Chapter 6*)
4. Halfway Change Breath with pushups (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 6*)

Late morning/early afternoon : 11:30AM – 1PM

Box Breathing for 15 minutes (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 2*)

Warmup/Workout/Cool down

Depending on how my body feels this may be an active recovery day or a Kettlebell workout. If active recovery I will go on a 3-5 mile ruck with a 25-50 pound ruck over mountainous terrain.

In either case, warmup and cool down are the same. I do not do any breathwork specific exercises during the kettlebell workout.

Warmup

Nasal humming for 5 minutes followed by 40 Wim Hof style hyperventilating breaths but without breath holds.

Workout

Kettlebell workout – no breathwork specific exercises during the workout.

Or

3-5 Mile Ruck with 25-50 pounds over mountainous terrain.

Cool down

15 minutes of Slower and Less – The Silent, Slow Breath (*A Journey in Breath: Chapter 7*)

Day 14

*This is the morning that I typically go Mountain Biking. With that in mind it is the same routine as that of Day 7.

Morning Routine: 5:00AM

1. Wim Hof Method x 3 cycles bundled with advanced technique 3 (Journey in Breath: Chapter 1)

Warmup

I will usually do some nasal humming in the car on the way to the trails. By the time I meet my friends for the ride I'm already warmed up and primed.

Workout

8-20 mile mountain bike ride. Depends on conditions, the types of trails we do, and any time constraints.

Cool down

When I get home I'll usually get in an ice bath and then sit out in the sun to dry up and warm up. During this time I will typically practice box breathing while listening to music and soaking up the rays.

Week 3 and 4

Rinse, Wash, and repeat. To keep things simple I will usually repeat a similar breathwork and workout cycle for weeks 3 and 4. For week 3 I will repeat week 1 and for week 4, I will repeat week 2. I may change the movements I do for some routines such as swap out pushups for pullups or vice versa. I may also add some static exercises and use a slow motion, burst breathing type of pattern while doing an exercise like wall squats. For the most part the breathwork is very similar.

Rest of the year

So what do you do after this month. Rinse, wash, and repeat. For the most part.

Each month I will try to add resistance in the form of additional reps, sets, and/or add a mask, plate carrier or increase the setting I use on the mask. Constant progression is the goal. At the beginning of the month make sure you perform a BOLT assessment (*A Journey in Breath: Breathing Assessment and Reaching Critical Mass*) so that you can gauge progress.

In addition, I am constantly on the lookout for new breathwork exercises or to add new breathing patterns to an existing exercise movement. There are so many variations and opportunities. In addition, I look for opportunities to turn a daily or weekly activity into a breathwork session. In, *A Journey in Breath*, I describe how I will use a mask while mowing the lawn or raking the leaves.

These are perfect opportunities to synergize and simplify. You have to mow the lawn anyway, why not turn it into a breathing workout.

Once a quarter I will do one week where I focus on breathwork. This is a break from my typical workout schedule where I'm either forced to take a break because of injury or I need some active recovery time before beginning my next cycle.

As I stated in, *A Journey in Breath*, log it. You will not be able to gauge your progress and determine what does and doesn't work for you if you are not keeping a log.

I designed the breathwork schedule above over time, determining what worked best for me to achieve my goals and fit my schedule. My progress and what works for me may not be what works for you. But you now have the foundational knowledge and examples to put together your own program and progress from a bad breather to a badass breathing warrior.

Enjoy!

Brian M. White