



BE BUDDY™

DEVELOPING WELLNESS FROM THE INSIDE OUT

FAQ:

Why is it important to breathe well?

We breathe over 20,000 times a day, but 90% of us are doing it wrong.

Breathing is the only part of the nervous system that we can control, so learning how to breathe will help you manage stress and overwhelm anytime, anywhere, and it is FREE!

Here are some of the benefits of breathing well:

- Improves the digestive system
- Enhances lung function (better gas exchange)
- Increase in muscle performance
- Reduces neck and shoulder pain
- Improves heart health
- Lower stress levels
- Decreases blood pressure
- Regulates the nervous system

What is "vertical breathing"?

Vertical breathing (aka *chest* or *apical breathing*) is when you breathe using the auxiliary breathing muscles high in your chest, often leading to overuse of the neck and shoulder muscles. Our bodies are not intended to breathe all the time vertically, and when we do, we pay the price.

Effects of vertical breathing:

- ↑ cortisol (stress hormone), neck and shoulder pain, increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, digestive problems
- ↓ immunity

What is diaphragmatic breathing(aka "belly breathing")?

"Belly" breathing (otherwise known as *abdominal breathing* or *diaphragmatic breathing*) allows us to make use of the primary breathing muscle, the diaphragm. This is the way the body is designed to breathe and (according to Dr. Belisa Vranich) is *anatomically congruous* and *biomechanically sound*. In other words, our body wants to breathe this way. By breathing using our primary breathing muscles, we capture the highest amount of oxygen into the densest, the most oxygen-rich portion of our lungs (the lower part of the lungs). This also relieves strain on our shoulders and backs by giving our auxiliary breathing muscles a break.

Belly breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is calming and restorative.

How can breathing better help my child or me?

Diaphragmatic "belly" breathing will help:



- Regulate the nervous system: breath low and slow to calm our thoughts and body
- unexplained breathlessness and breathing discomfort
- asthma and chronic lung complaints
- digestive issues
- snoring and sleep apnea
- poor breathing patterns and habits
- anxiety disorders
- over breathing
- sports performance

Don't we breathe automatically? Why do I need to be taught how to breathe?

Breathing is both voluntary and involuntary. This means that our habits play a role in how we breathe, and without awareness of these habits, our breathing can become inefficient and dysfunctional.

If breathing becomes dysfunctional, your health suffers. We are all born with a healthy breathing style, but many of us lose this style and adopt unhealthy and inefficient breathing habits. The goal of The Breathing Class is to **re-learn** how to breathe optimally. As Dr. Belisa Vranich states, "Our bodies know how to breathe this way. It wants to breathe this way."

What is good versus bad breathing?

Bad Breathing	What does it look like?	Good Breathing
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• chest breathing• mouth breathing• fast, shallow breaths• irregular breathing• noisy• increases stress		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• diaphragmatic breathing• nose breathing• slow, relaxed breaths• rhythmical breathing• quiet• decreases stress

Who should take a breathing class?

The Breathing Class is for you if you experience:

- neck/shoulder pain
- low stamina/endurance
- brain fog
- stress /anxiety
- back pain
- low energy
- high blood pressure
- acid reflux
- digestive issues
- sleep troubles

How can I help my child build healthy breathing habits?

The first step is to educate yourself so that you can build awareness of your own breathing habits. Children often model after their parents or caregivers, so working to improve breathing habits together is your best chance of success. The goal is to build this simple practice into the daily routine (i.e., bedtime).

What happens in a BREATHE™ coaching session?

Here is an outline of a typical 60-90 minute coaching session

- Introduction/Overview (5 minutes)
- **Determine your breathing style (10 minutes)**

This is a functional measurement of your breathing style based on two things:

1. **LOM**-location of movement (where is there movement during inhalation and exhalation)
2. **ROM**-range of motion

We will discuss your breathing style and develop a customized plan to improve your breathing habits. You will learn how to do your measurement so that you can track your progress.

How can better breathing help with stress and anxiety?

When you breathe into your chest (**vertically**), your body feels under attack (fight or flight), and the **sympathetic nervous** system takes over. This puts in an alert state all day long, creating stress. When you breathe vertically, you have less control of your nervous system.

Alternatively, when we breathe low and slow (horizontally) into the belly, the **vagus nerve** signals the **parasympathetic system** to rest and digest. This gives you more control over your reactions and calms the mind and body.

When does our breathing change?

First of all, we are all born with an anatomically perfect breath. We use our diaphragm without bracing or feeling self-conscious for several years before bad habits set-in.

Dr. Belisa Vranich completed a study of 158 children (ages 2-11) and found that by age 5 ½, dysfunctional breathing patterns begin to emerge. Teaching kids at a young age will give them the tools to self-regulate and

Why does our breathing style change as we get older?

Some of the reasons this happens are:

- Starting school
- Sitting longer
- Stop rolling on the floor
- Wearing backpacks
- Their social life increases (or not)
- Homework/testing (stress)
- Comparisons (self-conscious)
- They mimic parents
- Stethoscope at the doctor's office
- Tight clothes

How can better breathing help with physical performance and endurance?

According to Dr. Belisa Vranich in [Breathing for Warriors](#), *Your biggest enemy is perceived fatigue, which often comes from undertrained breathing muscles. Stronger breathing muscles mean more "fuel," better endurance, and conditioning (separate from cardio, which works out the heart).*

In other words, you must work and strengthen your breathing muscles separately from your sport for optimal performance.

How can breathing affect my mood?

There is a psychological element of breathing that directly affects your emotions. Breathing is a bridge linking body and mind and is the connection that can be activating, calming, or cathartic.

So this means that how we breathe can affect the way we feel.

Where does the session take place?

This can vary, but most of the time, individual coaching sessions occur in the client's home or health club. I will help you utilize space and props

accessible to you in your living environment, and this is not an option, we can work together to find a suitable location.

What qualifications do you have?

Elementary Educator	Certified Yoga & BREATHE™ Instructor	Yoga Calm Instructor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MA in Education from Saint Mary's University in 2000• Licensed Elementary Teacher (grades 1-6)• Over 20 years of working with children professionally and in various volunteer positions• CPR AED Certified• Trauma-informed yoga and instructional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RYT-200 (Registered Yoga Teacher)• Yoga Alliance member• Certified BREATHE™ Instructor (under Dr. Belisa Vranich)• Certified Yoga Sculpt Instructor• Certified through Yoga 4 Teens Instructor• Licensed and Insured for Liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certified Yoga Calm® Youth Instructor from 1000 Petals LLC, in St. Paul, MN• Move Mindfully®(school residency program) Instructor with Kathy Flaminio, 1000 Petals LLC, St. Paul, MN

How is the BREATHE™ method different?

As the founder of The Breathing Class™ and author of [*Breathe: The Simple, Revolutionary 14-Day Program to Improve your Mental and Physical Health*](#), Dr. Belisa Vranich shares how the **brain**, the **nervous system**, and **breathing** all work together. As a clinical psychologist, author, and public speaker, she has educated people nationwide about dysfunctional breathing and its effects on the body and mind. The method focuses on the **mechanics** and **psychology** of breathing styles and habits.

After years of research and case studies, she has created an easy to follow program to help individuals return to their natural and optimal breathing style. Using a functional measurement of your breathing and targeted exercises, people can improve their breathing habits and strengthen the breathing muscles. You will get measured results showing your progress!

Can breathwork training help my athletic performance?

Yes! As an athlete, fatigue is your worst enemy. The Breathing Class will help you breathe efficiently followed by strengthening the breathing muscles to help you breathe easier and perform longer and harder with less effort.

Your breathing muscles fatigue just like any other muscles in your body.

We will train them separately to:

- gain maximum efficiency with minimal effort
- optimize oxygen saturation when the system is anatomically congruous
- decrease recovery times due to higher efficiency
- increase ribcage mobility and flexibility
- relieve excess tension

How do I register for a BREATHE™ session?

Go to the [services](#) page on this website and register for your session with me. Or you are always welcome to reach out with questions or concerns anytime at stephanie@balancingelephants.com.