

Using Breath to Support Your Healing Capacity

– You will feel better, and it will likely help!

Our breathing style and practice are more important than most of us think. A routine or default of nostril breathing as we go through our day maintains a relaxed state of "idle gear" for our bodies, commonly termed the "rest, digest, and heal" zone. In the three descriptors above, most experts also include "optimize your T-cell immunity" or the feature of our immune system that targets cancer cells. Therefore, our MMC onboarding survey reviewed the breathing style as we view it as a possible lifestyle intervention worth addressing in chronic mouth breathers.

The nose not only filters and warms the air through the nasal nares and turbinate, respectively but also the **neurochemical receptors activate the release of nitrous oxide** around the body. This signaling molecule relaxes smooth muscles (airway, gastrointestinal tract, and blood vessel wall muscles), helping airway relaxation, digestion, and lowering blood pressure. This process also activates the parasympathetic system through the vagus nerve ("wandering" nerve that goes throughout the body), further **aiding the long-term needs of the body**. Ironically, breathing through the nose exchanges less air and therefore O₂ and CO₂ per minute; on average, about eight liters per minute versus 12 liters on average with mouth breathing.

This **reduced exchange aids** in maintaining a modest level of CO₂ at the capillary region that helps the hemoglobin release the O₂ to the intended tissue. This "over-breathing" is why hyperventilation that blows off too much CO₂ leads to depletion of CO₂ at the capillary level and in extreme cases, leads to **subsequent extremity numbness and fainting**. So we want to "Stay in our Nose" unless we are in a level 3 or above exercise event (strenuous where speaking is difficult) and the increased oxygen requirements require opening up the air intake to both nose and mouth.

Many may ask, does this help me relax more, **or is there any data suggesting that nostril breathing leads to better health outcomes?** Feeling better is not a weak reason for doing something so easy, but the data is there for improved general health outcomes ([Meta-Analysis for Breathwork and health outcome](#)). Despite the challenges of studying this, breathwork also shows an impact for improved results for some select cancer scenarios like metastatic breast cancer ([Yoga Breathing favorably impacts metastatic breast cancer](#)).

How do I check this box to optimize this vital tool?

Don't despair if you have a history of nasal issues or septal deviation; most of the time, your nasal turbinates will open on demand to allow optimal flow even if the bony structure is "pinching" off some channels.

First, consider trying to close your mouth, smile, and stay in your nose, and even if the situation permits, tape the mouth closed with some clear, 3M perforated medical tape as a reminder.

Second, spend some time with a **simple breathing app** to provide a visual aid to lengthen your breathing segments. Consider starting with a style of box breathing- 6-8 second inhale, 6-8 second relaxed hold, 6-8 second relaxed release or exhale, then 6-8 second end exhalation hold. Play with

various versions of less or more than this, but notice the relaxation that follows. Welcome to the secret of high performers to stay focused under pressure. Try this aid and pay attention to the controls in the upper right-hand corner to adjust the time of inhale, hold, and more- **Practice Aid [Breathe Slowly \(xhalr.com\)](#)**

To **learn from the master** of meditation, mindfulness, and health coaching friend and innovator **Rod Francis**. Here are six donated videos for supporting your recovery and intelligently organized progressive videos customized for cancer patients for easy learning. Please spread the thanks by visiting Rod's website and considering his services or posting some thanks.

Here are all your programs. Just click the link in the title to open the clip:

[Program 1: Breathing practices for greater calm.](#)

Here, you'll learn a simple, easy breath practice to help calm your mind in moments of stress and a mindfulness practice to incorporate into a routine.

[Program 2: Clearing the psychological space.](#)

In this, I will teach you a tool from Professor Eugene Gendlin called Clearing A Space. It's a science-backed method for getting a little mental room when you feel overwhelmed and unable to think clearly.

[Program 3: Kindness practices for a more robust immune system.](#)

Practices of kindness (often called Loving-Kindness) have been shown in multiple studies to lessen psychological and physical distress and increase happiness and well-being. Here, I teach you a simple yet easy practice to do so.

[Program 4: Body scanning to destress.](#)

This program is one of the foundational practices in the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program developed at UMass Medical School by Prof. Jon Kabatt-Zinn, one of my teachers. Learning it will add a fantastic, easy tool to work with the mind and body on this cancer journey.

[Program 5: How to work with ruminating thinking.](#)

One of our biggest problems is the disaster-prone nature of our thinking mind and the circular thinking spiral known as rumination. We can't change our diagnosis, but we can change how we think about it. Here, you'll learn how to do that.

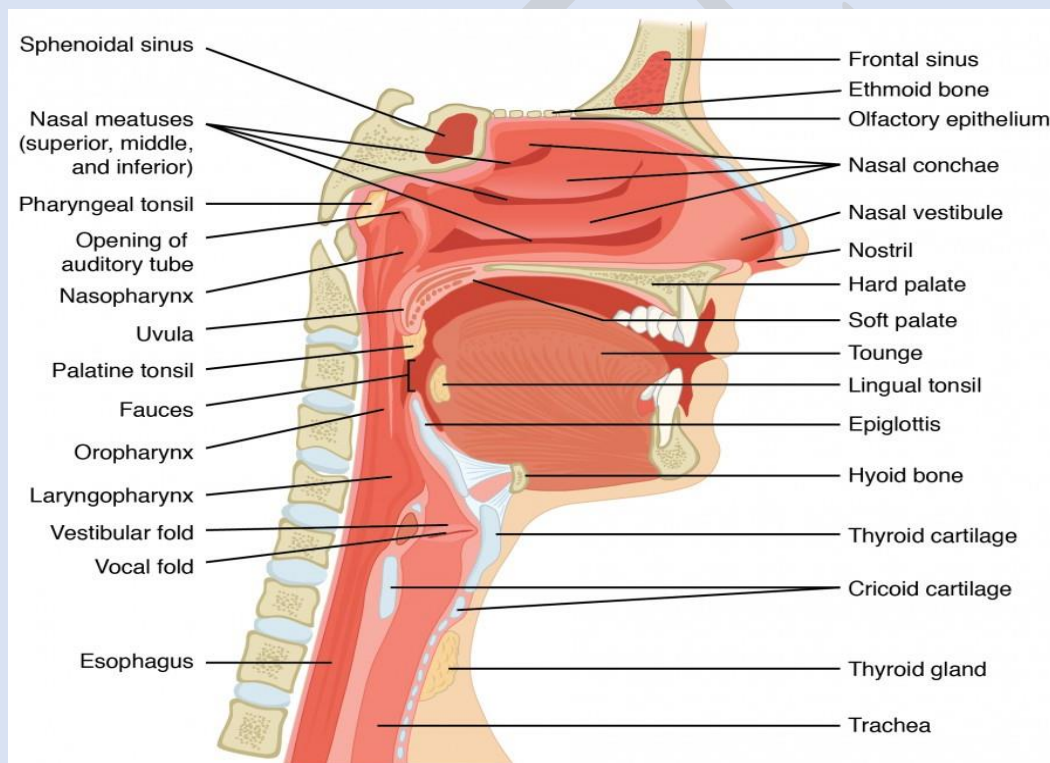
[Program 6: Finding Purpose, Creating Cellular Healing.](#)

Having a sense of life purpose energizes and motivates us to be proactive in our health and healing journey. Here, I teach you a simple process to uncover and connect with that and a meditation to build on the kindness practice and support healing in the areas that most need in you.

We wish you excellent health, wellness, and peace of mind.

Rod Francis - [Programs - Rod Francis Coaching](#)

Smile and "stay in your nose." - chuck



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[Stay Strong and Curious,](#)

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Other: **Additional Resources:**

- [Meakin Metabolic Care \(MMC\) Website](#)
- Meakin Metabolic Care [Service Plans](#)
- MMC Chronic Disease Prevention Program – [MD Predict Lab Panels and MD Review Metabolic Care Program](#)
- MMC Cancer Patient - [Metabolic Optimization Protocol \(C-MOP\)](#)
- Travis Christofferson MS: [books and biography](#)
- All Coach It Forward [Blogs](#) (including Questions From The Clinic)
- All Coach It Forward [Questions From The Clinic](#) (rationally researched for you)
- Heal Navigator (care partner) [Oncology Nurse Navigators](#)

Helpful Resources for Cancer Patients [MMC Tool Box - Meakin Metabolic Care](#)