



ROOM TO BREATHE

Think you know how to breathe? Think again. Trish Lesslie finds a method that could boost your mind and body with just 10 minutes a day

It's no secret that taking a few deep breaths can soothe fraught nerves, but devotees of a simple breathing technique believe the effects go much further than calming. As well as combating stress, proponents claim Transformational Breath (TB) can boost energy and immune response, improve respiratory problems and even help heal emotional trauma.

'It's like going for a talking therapy, but without the talking,' says Alan Dolan, who trained as a breath coach following a successful career in the aerospace industry. 'It's the ultimate self-development tool,' he says. 'It's with us always, free and easy to use and there are few limitations.'

So just what is it? Developed by Dr Judith Kravitz in the 1970s, TB combines breathwork with body mapping. The theory is that it releases energy and 'emotional blockages' in the body. There's a spiritual aspect too, which involves setting an intention at the start of your session – rather as you might at the outset of a yoga class.

So far, so *Ab Fab*. But while it's easy to dismiss TB as little more than hot air, the sheer volume of people attending sessions at Marylebone's Indaba Yoga Studio (indabayoga.com) suggests there are plenty who feel they're reaping the benefits of this alternative therapy.

The technique involves lying on your back and breathing through your mouth. You take a long,

deep abdominal inhale and let out a short, gentle sigh of an exhale. You basically breathe like a baby – without a pause between the inhale and exhale – only you do it with your mouth open wide enough for you to be able to insert your index finger.

While this 'connective breath' is billed as a form of self-healing, the best way to master the technique is at an introductory workshop. They take place regularly across the UK, with trained 'facilitators' on hand to whisper affirmations in your ear and gently apply pressure to areas such as your

shoulders to help release what are termed as 'blockages'.

A one-to-one session with breath coaches can make for a more powerful practice, but to experience TB in true style, head to one of Dolan's retreats in Lanzarote (pictured). They take place in a stylish villa with views of the island's volcanic landscape. Guests

who have raved about their stay include Bond star Naomie Harris and England international rugby ace Paul Sampson, who credits TB with helping him combat exercise-induced asthma.

For optimum benefits, Dolan says 10-20 minutes a day of self-practice is key. 'It's like restoring your factory settings,' he says. And unlike most alternative therapies, it's free and can be done anytime, anywhere you can lie down in peace for a few minutes. Now there's a sigh of relief.

transformationalbreath.co.uk; breathguru.com/retreats



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