FAST FACTS

Diaphragmatic breathing

Abdominal or belly breathing

Why 'how' you breathe matters

Breathing immediately influences your autonomic nervous system. The slower, diaphragmatic breath sends signals that indicate safety, and therefore a state of wellbeing in which your body can prioritise digestion, reproduction & repair. Shallow or superficial chest breathing is perceived as a cue for panic or immediate attention.

Two pathways for breathing

Every 'thing' you put into your body is a signal - even your breath!

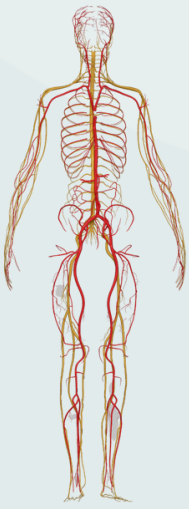
Breathing through the mouth gives you access to larger volumes of breath when the body is under duress. This is more likely to be in a 'stress' situation (running, fighting, dancing, spin class). When done briefly/intentionally, this is an hermetic stressor. Chronic mouth breathing does not activate the parasympathetic nervous system.

When nasal breathing, you're likely in a less demanding state (gentle walk, yin yoga, watching a movie, a slow bike ride). These settings are more likely to be times when you are not under threat.

Nasal breathing is one of the ways you can let your body know to prioritise parasympathetic function.

How to belly breathe

- Rest one hand on your belly button and the other on your chest
- As you breathe in, focus on the lower hand raise BEFORE your chest rises
- Imagine a balloon is in your belly and you're filling it up (it might feel like you're pushing your stomach out to begin - that doesn't matter)
- Lay on your back to begin if difficult to access a full breath



Diaphragmatic breathing

To further enhance the positive effects of breath work, taking your breath down lower into your belly impacts the Vegas Nerve (the tenth cranial nerve).
It is a critical nerve network that plays a fundamental role in regulating various bodily functions including:

- heart function
- rate of respiration
- emotion and mood regulation
- inflammatory response
- baroreceptors to inform blood pressure regulation
- gastrointestinal function
- autonomic nervous system