

# Purposeful Movement

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR AMAZING BODIES

*I will give thanks to You, because I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.  
Psalm 139:14*

**HELLO**  
*darling*

*It's back!*

*I decided to do another issue to accompany the "Let's Breathe" video series, so you'll have a ready reference for all of your breathing needs. I pray it is helpful for you. If you have any questions, please feel free to let me know - I'm here for you! Now - let's breathe!*

**You are loved!**

*Jaye*

## LET'S BREATHE - CONNECTING W/YOUR BREATH

by Jacinta "Jaye" DeCohen, C.P.T.  
(because initials make you sound official)

*"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7*

We breathe because we're alive. That's how it was set up in the beginning, and still works today. Between our first breath and our last breath, we live, move, and have our being. THAT we breathe is vital to life. HOW we breathe is vital to the *quality* of our lives.

Our bodies, minds, and emotions are all connected and affect one another. If you're anxious, your breathing increases and becomes shallow, you and your muscles are tense and "crunchy", and your mind is racing along with your heart. Conversely, when you're calm, your mind is clearer, your breathing is deeper and slower, you and your muscles are relaxed, and your heart rate is lower.

Controlling our thoughts and our breathing can help to regulate our emotions. Think of it as "internal housekeeping" - as you exhale, you get rid of old, stale air and "stinkin' thinkin'" that can bring you down (more on that later). Then as you inhale, you take in fresh, new air into your lungs, and can bring positive, uplifting thoughts (of your choosing) into your head. Read on on how to do just that and how it all works.



# The Sympathetic & Parasympathetic Nervous Systems

*(may contain more info than you want to know, but knowledge is power in this case!)*

Our involuntary bodily functions, like breathing, blood pressure, body temperature, heart rate, etc., are controlled by the Autonomous Nervous System, or the ANS (*yes, we're going to use acronyms here - do you see how long those words are??*). Two portions of the ANS are the Sympathetic & Parasympathetic Nervous Systems, or SNS & PNS, respectively. These systems can either speed up or slow down functions in the body that the ANS controls.

The Sympathetic Nervous System, or SNS, is also known as the "Fight or Flight" response and has these effects when activated:

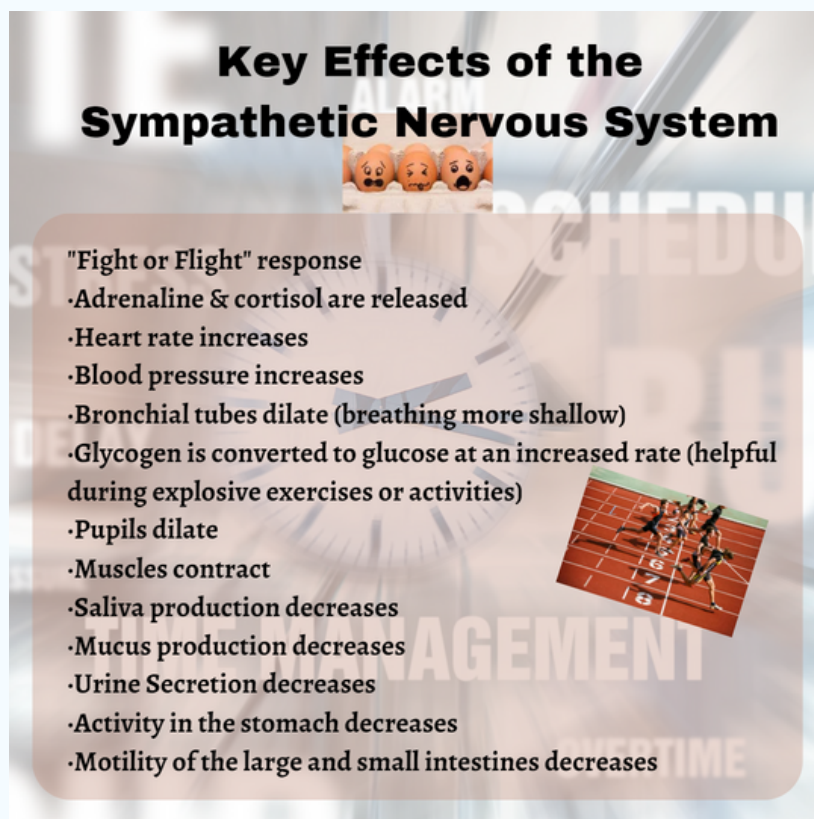


Figure 1: SNS, or "Fight or Flight" Response

The SNS kicks in during situations when you need to think or act quickly, but it's also helpful if you're, say, sprinting, and need to get to that finish line FIRST, as well as other physical activities that require you to run, jump, dodge, dip, duck, dive or dodge (*cue the obscure movie reference*). The SNS is designed for only a short "stay" in that stressful state. If we continue in that state too long, our bodies and minds start to suffer. More on that later.

The Parasympathetic Nervous System, or PNS (*sometimes referred to as PSNS*), is also known as the "Rest & Digest" or "Feed & Breed" response. You'll find its effects on the body on the next page.

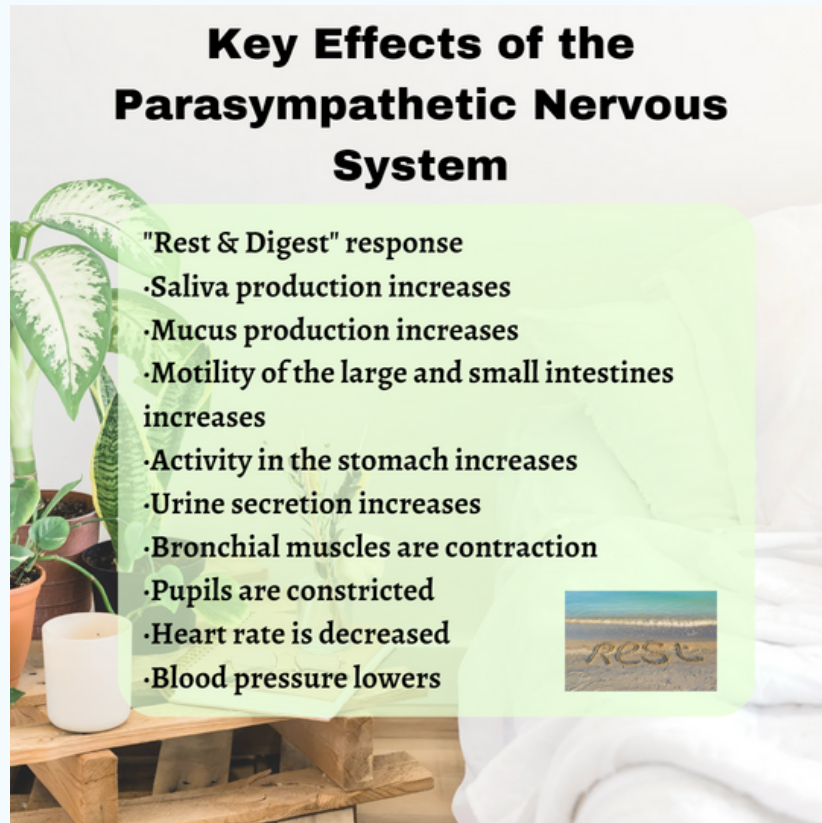


Figure 2: The Parasympathetic Nervous System, or PNS

The PNS counteracts the effects of the SNS, and can aid in undoing the harmful effects that staying in the SNS too long can have on the body. It also helps us to relax our bodies and calm our minds. Think about when you sigh or yawn - it's your body's way of trying to stimulate the PNS to get you to either rest or relax. Like I say, our bodies are smart - by divine design!



## The Quality of Our Breathing is Important

*(this is the good stuff - the meat & potatoes right here!)*

While it has its benefits in short-term situations, staying in the SNS, or continually taking shallow, short breaths from our chest, will stress our bodies, as adrenaline & cortisol are pumped into our systems on the regular. This can be caused by external stressors, like financial/work-related pressures, chronic pain, and other situations that can cause you high anxiety. There can also be underlying medical reasons, such as Parkinson's disease, that can cause a dysfunction of the Autonomic Nervous System as a whole, which I will not cover here, as it is outside my scope of practice, and cannot speak to that. If that is your case, then you need to consult with a medical professional.

If our SNS is stimulated too frequently by these external stressors, it can result in chronic stress and can damage the blood vessels and arteries, thus increasing blood pressure and the risk of stroke or heart attack. Also, your immune function is lowered, making you more susceptible to all the germies that are lying in wait to infect you. If you are in a situation that is NOT considered dangerous, deep breathing, taking care of your thoughts, and activating the PNS can help counteract these effects.





Breathing is stimulated by the presence of CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) in the body and allows O<sub>2</sub> (oxygen) to be released by the red blood cells (rbc's) to be used by the muscles, the organs (including our brains), and other cells in our body. That is a good thing!

Taking short, quick, shallow breaths, as happens while the SNS is in effect, does *NOT* allow more O<sub>2</sub> to be taken into the body, instead, it keeps the CO<sub>2</sub> lower. In fact, it signals to the body that it has too many red blood cells (*lies!*), leaving the poor little rbc's with a skeleton crew. When we hold our breath (*not too long*), breathe slower, longer and deeper, our CO<sub>2</sub> levels rise and the O<sub>2</sub> rich rbc's can do their thing, which in turn allows the rest of the organs in the body to do their thing (by stimulating the PNS), including repairs to damage (*alright, back to work everyone, you've got all the O<sub>2</sub> you need!*), and boosting your immune system.

Finally, finally, here are some breathing exercises that will help to stimulate the PNS, get O<sub>2</sub> to your body parts, and release excess CO<sub>2</sub>, which houseplants love and need (*see, it's a win-win!*).



## Breathing Exercises

*(let's put into practice what you have learned. You DID learn something, right?)*

Now that we've learned a little about the why's and wherefores of breathing, let's try three of these breathing techniques out. The "Let's Breathe" video series covers more than three, so check them out on the website (link at the end of this eBook).

### ***Five-Finger Breathing***

First, let's start out with **Five-Finger Breathing** - it stimulates the PNS, but also helps bring focus. It uses not only breathwork, but your senses of touch and sight. This can be done anytime - at home, watching TV or a child's \_\_\_\_\_ event/game (*you can fill in the blank there*), even at work. In fact, it's great to help you during those long, drawn out meetings, whether in person or online. It's great for when you need to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts, and/or check in with God - think Jesus Christ writing in the sand before answering the scribes & Pharisees regarding the woman taken in adultery (John 8:2-11). Five-Finger Breathing is also great for staying your mind, reciting positive affirmations, or memorizing/retemorizing (retaining in the memory). It's an all-purpose breathing technique!

### **Five-Finger Breathing** (cont.)

Enough of the preamble, already, Jaye, get to the BREATHING! Alright, alright! Here you are in a beautiful infographic (accompanied by a demonstrative GIF):

Figure 3: Five-finger breathing



### **Five-Finger Breathing.**

An infographic titled "Five-Finger Breathing" from agapefit.org. It features a purple background with white topographic-style lines and green leaf illustrations. The title is in a large, white, serif font. Below the title, the website "agapefit.org" is listed. A paragraph of text reads: "Repeat as needed until your desired level of calm and focus is achieved. You may even change hands if you'd like." Below this are five numbered steps in green circles, each with a corresponding text box:

- 01**: Can be done sitting or standing, as long as you're comfortable. Place your left hand in front of you, like you're giving a high five, or waving "hello"
- 02**: Relax your shoulders, and take your right hand, placing the forefinger along the outside bottom of your thumb.
- 03**: Trace your hand with your finger, in accord with your breathing: inhale as you go up the finger, then exhale as you go back down the finger. Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth - make your exhales slightly longer than inhales.
- 04**: You may go as slowly as you like, but don't go too quickly, you don't want to stimulate the SNS! When you get to the bottom of the pinky finger, reverse your tracing, keeping the same breathing pattern.
- 05**: You may also say a positive, uplifting "mantra", like "I am loved"; "God loves me"; "I am able", etc. - whatever it is you need at the time. Say it during the exhalation phase, either out loud or to yourself, though saying it out loud brings in another sense - hearing - helping to bring your focus sharper.

## **Double Breathing**

The infographic is titled "DOUBLE BREATHING" with the subtitle "Let's Breathe". It features a central logo with the letters "AF" and a stylized figure. The instructions are presented in five circular callouts connected by a wavy line. The background is light blue with decorative leaf patterns at the bottom.

**DOUBLE BREATHING**  
*Let's Breathe*

**AF**

Sit or stand in a comfortable position, ears in line with your shoulders, and shoulders relaxed

You inhale through your nose, exhale through your nose and mouth.

GENTLY take a short inhale, finishing up with a long inhale, then GENTLY exhale first short, finishing with a longer exhale. That's set #1. Repeat 4 more times.

Your inhalations and exhalations should flow - think of the motion of the ocean, but not to the point of hyperventilation. Keep the breaths gentle and smooth.

Start out with 5 sets of breaths, wait, see how you feel, then add more if needed.

AGAPEFIT.ORG

## **Next up: Double Breathing**

**Double Breathing** gently stimulates the SNS, to bring alertness when you need it, but you are still calm. It can be done by anyone needing a quick pick-me-up in addition to, or in place of, a cup of coffee/tea/whatever you drink to get you going. It consists of a short, followed by a longer inhale, then a short, followed by a longer exhale. It's like you catch a whiff of something yummy, like freshly baked bread, then take a deeper breath to get the fullness of the aroma. Follow that up with a short breath out, then a sigh of delight - yum!! Here's another lovely infographic on your left.



*Did someone say  
bread?  
Mmmmmmm!*

## ***Deep Belly/Diaphragmatic Breathing***

***Deep Belly, or Diaphragmatic Breathing***, is what most people think of when we talk about deep breathing exercises. As you can see here, and in the Let's Breathe video series, this isn't the end all be all, but it IS the most popular, and best way to let go and relax. It's used after yoga and other practices, which can get your heart rate up, to center, ground, and relax your mind and heart. It can be used to calm you down after an extremely stressful day or incident; during childbirth (Lamaze, anyone?); after a big, filling meal; before going to bed - anytime you need your body and mind to just Chill & Be Still. It stimulates the PNS (see benefits above) and tones that Vagus Nerve.

It's 1:2 breathing, meaning your exhales are going to be twice as long as your inhales. It's called Deep Belly, or Diaphragmatic breathing, because it tones your diaphragm as you use it to exhale. As you inhale, you fill your belly first, then let your chest rise. As you exhale, you reverse the process, pulling your belly in to get a full, cleansing exhale, without completely depleting your lungs.

Like the ***Double Breathing*** above, your breaths should be gentle and flowing, like the motion of the ocean. Your thoughts should align with your breathing - light, positive, calming, believable - because if you don't believe it, it won't help you to relax. I will talk a little bit more about thoughts later on. Are you ready to get your chillax on? Great, let's go!



*Deep Belly/Diaphragmatic Breathing-Seated*




## **Deep Belly/Diaphragmatic Breathing**

And still ANOTHER beautiful Infographic!

The infographic is a vertical flowchart with a light beige background and a subtle pattern of leaves. It features several text boxes connected by a central vertical line. The title is in a white box at the top. Below it is the AgapēFit logo and website. The instructions are in dark brown boxes, and the breathing counts are in white boxes. There is a small illustration of three potatoes between the inhale and exhale instructions. The final instruction is in a dark brown box at the bottom.

*Let's Breathe*  
**Deep Belly/Diaphragmatic Breathing**

 [www.agapefit.org](http://www.agapefit.org)

This technique is best done laying down, but can be done sitting or even on your hands and knees. The key is to be able to freely breathe into your belly. To begin, get into a comfortable position and take 5 deep breaths:

If you are sitting or lying, place one hand on your belly, just underneath the bottom of your ribcage, and the other hand on your chest.

Inhale for a count of 3 potatoes ("1 potato, 2 potato," etc.). Let your belly rise first, then your chest rises.



Exhale for a count of 6 potatoes, letting your chest fall first, then drawing your belly in toward your spine, but not so much that you're gasping for your next breath.

Repeat, finding YOUR flow, but always making the exhales 2x as long as your inhales. As you exhale, with the breath, feel your muscles relax, the tension leaving your body, and your heart rate slowing.

On your third breath, think of a positive, uplifting thought - INHALE it, along with new, fresh air. As you exhale, allow the stale thoughts to leave with the stale air, leaving your mind & body ready to receive the new.

*Repeat two more times, then go back to normal breathing. You should feel more relaxed. If not, take a few more of those deep, cleansing breaths.*

For more breathing exercises, check out the "Let's Breathe" series on the [AgapēFit website](http://www.agapefit.org).



# The Power of Our Thoughts

*(real talk - do you think about what you're thinking about?)*

*I wrote a blog post about this very topic. If you want to read it, here's the link: [Think About What You're Thinking About](#), as this is just a short synopsis.*

Breathing techniques and exercises are great, but they won't do us any good if we don't control our minds & thoughts. Thoughts come into our minds continually, some good, some neutral, some bad. What we do with thoughts that don't serve us is immensely important to our fitness as a whole and has a huge effect on our bodies. Continually thinking negative thoughts eventually can stress our bodies so much it starts to break down, lowering our immune function, increasing heart disease, and diabetes. Too much adrenaline & cortisol pumped into our bodies, due to staying in the SNS too long = bad times.

As I've stated before, design connects everything to work together. When we're controlling our thoughts to think those things which will calm us, coupled with deep breathing, the PNS sends signals to the body to slow the heart rate, lower the blood pressure, get your digestion going, and everything else you need to either Rest & Digest, Feed & Breed, or Chill & Be Still. If we allow our thoughts to run around in our heads like untrained monkeys, the SNS stays in effect and the result can end in those monkeys destroying any shred of relaxation you were trying to achieve. Get those damn monkeys in line!



*Just say "NO" to uncontrolled thoughts!*

*"If I controlled my hands like I control my mind, I'd beat the sh\*t out of myself"*

R. WILLIAMS



*Ahhh, that's better!*

## Take Control of Your Thoughts by Renewing Your Mind

*One of the greatest gifts we've been given is freedom of will. The renewed mind is the key to power. When you renew something, you renovate, transform, change, revive, or begin it again. You can do the same with your mind. You can transform or change the way you think from one way to another. Renewing your mind takes work, but if YOU don't control your thoughts, someone or something else will. Again, we need to get those monkeys in line!*

Guess what? you *DO* have the power to replace thoughts of helplessness, hopelessness, despair, anxiety, etc., with thoughts of power, love, hope, and victory. God gave us the best thoughts to think - about Himself, Jesus Christ, ourselves, and others. It's in His Word, and all we need to do is read and choose to believe it. "What things should I think," you ask? How about, "I am loved", "I am victorious," "My life DOES matter," and many others. Oooh, time for yet ANOTHER infographic! Hooray!



5 THINGS TO HELP YOU TO RENEW YOUR MIND

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." John 17:17

These are just 5 of many, many truths found in the Bible to which you can renew your mind. Pick one and anytime a negative thought enters your mind, say instead:



I JOHN 4:8, 10

God is love (agapē), & He loved me before I loved Him (or even was born)



III JOHN 2

God wants me to prosper & be in health above all things



ROMANS 8:31

God is for me, who can be against me?



GALATIANS 5:1

Christ has made me free.



ROMANS 5:1

I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Once you've replaced any stale, negative, stinky thoughts in your mind with one or more that's fresh, positive, and new (like those on the left, above, or others you may already know), commit the new thoughts to memory, so that anytime those little untrained monkeys raise their chaotic heads, you can get them in line with one or more of the positive, uplifting thoughts. "I'm a failure," NO! "I'm more than a conqueror!" "I can't do this," NO! "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me!" (Philippians 4:13) - Bonus!!

**It's Up to You Now**

As I said before, it's going to take some work, especially if this whole concept is new to you. Be patient with yourself, but be persistent. It will pay off. Be KIND to yourself, period. Take a chance, get out of your comfort zone - insert your favorite inspiring cliché here. I'm here to guide and help you get to a more fit life in every category, but I can't MAKE you do anything. Again, you have the freedom of will to do as you please, unless you decide to give it up that freedom. I encourage you to try it and find out (*as opposed to f\*cking around and finding out*). Even if you don't yet trust me, trust God, because He's the only Trustworthy One I know, and He's never let me (and many others I know) down - ever.

And, that's plenty for this issue! If you would like to talk with me more in-depth one-on-one, well, that's what I'm here for! And if you'd like a more extensive list of positive affirmations from the Bible, you may either email or text me. My contact information is on the last page.

## One More Thing...

I mentioned in the "Double Breathing" portion of this newsletter about pretending to smell something yummy, like bread. Well, with the oh-so-simple recipe below, you don't have to pretend! This is one of my new go-to recipes from a baker that I follow on Instagram. So yummy, and so easy!



## Maxy's Overnight Rustic Rolls

Mix the ingredients before you go to bed and bake in the morning,  
or make in the morning and bake for dinner

### Ingredients

- 580g / 4 cups plus 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 14g / 4 1/8 teaspoons Instant dried yeast
- 1 Tablespoon Salt
- 500ml / 2 cups plus 1 Tablespoon Cold Water
- 2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- 2 Tablespoons Honey
- 100g / 3/4 cup Sunflower Seeds (Optional)

### Method

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl, cover with Saran wrap or a large proving bag. Place in the fridge and allow to prove overnight.
2. Generously flour your surface and tip out the dough. Flour your hands, fold and shape the dough into a log and divide your dough into 10 pieces using a sharp knife or a dough scraper (I ended up using my stainless steel cake scraper haha – Maxy). These do not have to be a particular shape, neither do they have to be identical.
3. Flour two baking trays (I line mine with either parchment paper or silicon mats – Jaye), place your dough pieces on the trays ensuring they are well spaced apart. Scatter over some sunflower seeds or dust the pieces with a little flour. Cover with a tea towel and allow to rest for 25-30 minutes. Preheat your oven to 210 °C fan / 425 °F (Convection) / 450 °F (Regular oven)
4. Place a heatproof baking dish (or cast iron pan – Jaye) filled with water inside the bottom of your oven, pop in your baking trays with the rolls and bake for 15-20 minutes.
5. Once the rolls are baked, allow them to cool, then transfer the rolls onto a cooling rack.
6. Enjoy! Xx Oo



Comments, questions, prayer  
requests, etc.?

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