

## Effective Breathwork

Understanding your day-to-day breathing gives you physical and mental confidence, makes you more comfortable delivering a message infused with energy, and enables you to speak with a vocal tone that is both vibrant and dynamic. The following two exercises will help you to deliver your peak performance.



### Body Oxygen Level Test (BOLT)

BOLT is aimed to measure the relative breathing volume during rest and breathlessness during physical activity. A higher score = a lower breathing volume which in turn means less breathlessness.

#### Measure your own BOLT score

- Breathe in normally through your nose and then breathe out normally (also through your nose).
- Once you have exhaled, pinch your nose with your fingers to prevent any air from entering during the next step.
- With your nose pinched, **count the number of seconds** until you feel the urge to breathe again. Pay attention to your body's cues signaling the impulse to inhale. This often manifests as the need to swallow, a constriction in the airways, or contractions of the breathing muscles in your abdomen and throat.
- Un-pinch your nose and inhale as calmly as possible – resume your normal breathing.

The number of seconds it takes before you feel the urge to breathe again = your BOLT

This is not a test to evaluate how long you can go without breathing but rather the time it takes for your body to respond to the lack of air. It is not a 'hold your breath' challenge!

Most people have a BOLT score of around 20 (seconds). To reach your full vocal potential as a performer or speaker you should aim for a score of around 40 seconds.



## Equal Length Breathing Technique

When we ensure that each inhale and exhale of breath is the same length, it helps to soothe our autonomic nervous system and produce a calm and relaxing feeling.

**Find a relatively quiet and calm environment for this exercise.**

- Sit upright and close your eyes
- Inhale through your nose for four seconds
- Exhale through your nose for four seconds
- Repeat the above process for five minutes

**As you become familiar with this technique, you can start to extend your inhale/exhale time to six and then eight seconds.**



For more 'Effective Breathwork' information, exercises, and techniques, visit [danielkoek.com](https://danielkoek.com) and join **The Ultimate Performance Academy**. Visit [danielkoek.com](https://danielkoek.com) for details.