



Confident Rider Series



DAY FOUR THE 1:2 BREATH

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The 1:2 Breath

Welcome to Part Four!

We have another skill to add your confidence boosting tool kit today and that is the 1:2 breath.

Before we get into the specifics of this particular breath technique, I want to talk briefly about the mechanics of the breath and its relationship to our mental condition and state.

Any emotional state that we experience - be it confidence, anxiety, happiness, sadness - all create an emotional and energetic frequency in our bodies. Naturally, this is something that we are intrinsically aware of, but it's also very measurable and observable in our brain wave activity (which directly correlates with the quality of our breath).

If you are feeling upset or anxious, then your breath will be shallow and short. Conversely, if you feel calm and in control, your breaths will be fluid and long. This information is not that useful in and of itself until you understand that you can control the quality of your emotions by controlling the quality of your breath. If you feel anxious and out of control, altering the breath by increasing its length and duration has an immediate effect on brain wave activity. The two are intrinsically related.

The breath is also intimately linked to our nervous systems. To keep it simple, the inhalation is linked to the sympathetic nervous system (think flight and fight response), and the exhalation is linked to the parasympathetic nervous system (relaxation response). Consequently, it's the exhalation that we really want to emphasize to move us from feeling overly adrenaline-fueled to more calm and in control.

In practical terms, this means that if you have an inhalation of 6 counts, you want your exhalation to be 12 counts. Work within the comfortable limits of your breath, but if possible, maintain a total breath round of at least 12 counts. The aim is to double the length of your exhalation in comparison to the inhalation.

This is a really easy, invisible and highly effective tool that you can use at any stage. You could use it when you are waiting for your turn in the competition arena; you could use it if you feel like you are getting a little disheveled and off centre in training. Whenever you feel as though your thought processes are getting a little out of hand, introducing the 1:2 breath will definitely begin to steer things in the right direction.


run your own race

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In practical terms, this means that if you have an inhalation of 6 counts, you want your exhalation to be 12 counts. Work within the comfortable limits of your breath, but if possible, maintain a total breath round of at least 12 counts. The aim is to be doubling the length of your exhalation compared to the inhalation.

This is a really easy, invisible and highly effective tool that you can use at any stage.

You could use it when you are waiting for your turn in the competition arena, you could use it if you feel like you are getting a little disheveled and off centre in training; at any point that you feel as though your thought processes are getting a little “out of hand”, bring in this 1:2 count breath ratio and I guarantee you that you will start to turn things around.



Let's have a practice now

Sit or lie in a comfortable position, allowing yourself to completely relax.

Close your eyes and take one or two deep breaths in and out.
Place both of your hands on your stomach, becoming aware of the rise and fall
of the belly as it moves with the breath.

With the next inhalation, start to lengthen the breath slightly,
pausing at the top of the breath before exhaling completely.

Do this two or three times.

With the next breath, start to introduce some conscious control.
Inhale to a count of 4, suspend the breath briefly at the top of the inhalation
and exhale to a count of 8.

Play with the length of the breath until you reach a breath count
that is within your comfortable limit whilst extending the exhalation
to double that of the inhalation.

Take 10-12 breaths working with your new breath ratio before returning
to the natural breath.



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