



Z-Health Newsletter - February 2009

Your monthly insight to Life in Motion

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Calendar of Events

Late last year we released the first part of our 2009 calendar. View it below and be sure to check our [website](#) regularly for updates.

Conferences & Workshops

- Santa Clara, CA: Apr 15-19 - Body, Mind, Spirit Conference
- Minneapolis, MN: July 15-17 - Essential Secrets of Elite Performance (sponsored by DragonDoor Publications)

R-Phase (Level 1)

- Phoenix, AZ: Jan 23-25 & Mar 6-8
- Durham, NC: Jan 30-Feb 1 & Mar 13-16
- Edinburgh, Scotland: Mar 30 - Apr 4
- San Diego, CA: Mar 20-22 & Apr 24-26
- Denver, CO: May 29-31 & July 24-26
- San Diego, CA: June 15-20

I-Phase (Level 2)

Ask Dr. Cobb - Respiration

If you have a question you'd like Dr. Cobb to answer in a future column, send it to askdrcobb@zhealth.net.

Q: *I have spoken to one of your advanced level trainers and he mentioned the importance of looking at breathing for people with chronic upper back tension. Can you please explain?*

Thank you.

A: This is a great question and quite far-reaching. To begin there are three basic facts about breathing that are very important:

1. There are over 20 muscles and numerous joints involved in breathing.
2. The average person breathes 10-14 times/minute. This results in roughly 18-20,000 breaths per day and approximately 140,000 breaths per week.
3. The majority of these 20,000 breaths per day should NOT require your upper chest and shoulders to move.

When you combine these three facts you will see that poor breathing practices may have a tremendous impact on your body, through sheer volume. Imagine a golfer hitting 140,000 BAD golf shots. Do you think this might create some kind of discomfort or injury? Of course it would.

If you study breathing in depth, you will find that most neuromusculoskeletal specialists talk about these classic signs of poor breathing – all of which contribute to ongoing upper back tension, pain, and poor movement:

- Anterior Head Carriage
- Rounded Shoulders
- Thoracic Hyperkyphosis (Rounded Mid-Back)
- Rigid Spinal Joints

Additionally, poor breathing practices often lead to low-grade, but chronic, hyperventilation or overbreathing. This is usually accompanied by one or more of the following:

- Shortness of Breath for No Apparent Reason
- Chronic Mouth Breathing
- Frequent Sighing or Yawning
- Sweating
- Frequent Dizziness
- Slurred Speech
- Cold, Tingling, or Numb Lips or Extremities
- Nausea or Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Aching Muscles or Joints
- Tiredness, Unsteadiness, or Weakness
- Restless Sleep, Insomnia, and Nightmares

- Brookline, MA: Feb 26-Mar 1
- Phoenix, AZ: May 14-17
- Edinburgh, Scotland: May 21-24
- Durham, NC: June 4-7

S-Phase (Level 3)

- Phoenix, AZ: June 25-28

T-Phase (Level 4)

- Phoenix, AZ: Feb 11-14 *NOTE: Wed-Sat

9S: Sustenance

- Phoenix, AZ: July 8-12

- Dry Mouth
- Pressure in Throat or Difficulty Swallowing
- Impaired Memory or Concentration
- Tinnitus (Ringing In Ears)
- Blurred Vision, Tunnel Vision, Double Vision, or Flashing Lights

And, it's incredibly common! In the United States, 10% of the clients seen in general internal medicine practice have chronic hyperventilation listed as their **primary diagnosis**.

How do you know if you have a breathing issue? One simple way to begin testing this is to look for Paradoxical breathing. Paradoxical breathing is a reversal of the normal body coordination required for efficient respiration. It is described this way:

"Paradoxical breathing is where some or all of the chest wall moves inward on inspiration and outward on expiration."

In other words, paradoxical breathing means that during inhalation the abdomen contracts and moves IN while the chest moves OUT. This is in direct contrast to what should happen. Paradoxical breathing promotes many of the issues above and is present in most people that carry excess upper back tension.

Here is a quick test to determine if you might be breathing paradoxically:

The High-Low Test

1. Sit comfortably in a nice tall posture.
2. Place one hand on your upper abdomen and the other on your upper chest.
3. Inhale and exhale 5 times.
4. During inhalation look for these three signs of paradoxical breathing:
 - The upper hand moves first.
 - The upper hand moves upward toward the chin rather than slightly forward.
 - The upper hand moves significantly more than the hand on the abdomen.

If any of these things occur, it strongly suggests an upper-chest pattern of breathing or paradoxical breathing. **Over the course of a year, you will take over 8,000,000 breaths and if most of them are paradoxical, you are asking for trouble! So what do you do? For many of our R-Phase clients, we begin their breathing training with this simple exercise:**

Straw Breathing

This easy to perform drill is one of the best ways to strengthen your breathing muscles and retrain your respiration. The "target" of this drill is to focus on a slow, controlled exhale, breathing out through pursed lips. This is similar to blowing air through a straw. Here are the steps in order:

1. Sit or stand in a comfortable long spine position.
2. Place one hand on your abdomen and the other on the chest to monitor for correct movement.
3. Breathe in slowly through the nose for two for seconds.
4. Slowly breathe out through pursed lips for 4-8 seconds.
5. Build up to 30-40 repetitions, twice per day.

As you practice this regularly, your breathing will improve dramatically which will have a fantastic impact on your entire body over the course of time. Give this a try and let us know your results, or if we can help you in any way.

Keep Moving,

Dr. Cobb

Super Bowl XLIII

Regardless of how you may feel about the outcome of the Big Game (Arizona Cardinals 23, Pittsburgh Steelers 27), it was, without question, an exciting game – filled with Super Bowl firsts, dramatic moments, and extraordinary displays of athletic prowess. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell called it, "a game for the ages."

Major sporting events always bring out the best, and the worst, in teams and athletes, and this Super Bowl didn't disappoint. This game featured:

- The LONGEST play in Super Bowl history – a 100-yard interception returned for a touchdown
- The first safety in a Super Bowl since 1991
- The largest (almost) comeback in Super Bowl history

This was Arizona's first trip to the Super Bowl – an unlikely participant, having ended the regular season with a 9-7 record and entering the playoffs as a #4 seed. When Arizona, 7-point underdogs, went down 17-7 at the half on the interception returned for a touchdown, many football fans wrote off the Cardinals. Arizona remained scoreless throughout the third quarter, and were down 20-7 by the end of the three periods of play.

Here is where the game gets interesting from a Z-Health Neurology of Motivation (I-Phase) perspective. When you look at the Neurology of Motivation, the activities that truly and easily motivate us usually are:

1. Fulfilling
2. Produce some form of pleasure
3. Create a sense of loss when missing

Winning the Super Bowl definitely falls in to the category of something that is MOTIVATING – it is the dream of every NFL player. Now you have two teams that are led by quarterbacks with previous Super Bowl experience -- Kurt Warner was wrapping up his 11th season in the NFL and his third SuperBowl while Ben Roethlisberger was finishing his fifth season and making his second Super Bowl appearance. Both had won one Super Bowl previously, so they know what winning feels like.

So, now it's the beginning of the 4th quarter, and Pittsburgh appears to be resting on its 13-point lead, figuring they have this thing wrapped up. They are likely not particularly motivated since they had led the entire game, and believe the Lombardi trophy is already theirs. Twenty-two Steelers, including twelve starters, had already won a Super and had probably already projected the win. At this point, it was their game not to lose, so in evaluating their behavior options, they didn't have to do anything different.

However, Arizona is not yet ready to be counted out. At this point they have two things in their favor – MOTIVATION (they are behind, the underdogs, and only six team members had any Super Bowl experience) and a veteran quarterback. So, their veteran quarterback engineered a handful of drives in the 4th that put the Cardinals up by 3 with about two and a half minutes left. They put 16 points on the board in under 8 minutes! Larry Fitzgerald, in his first Super Bowl appearance, played some truly inspired football during the 4th quarter.

At this point, Pittsburgh did what experienced teams do, they realized that they were about to LOSE, so they re-found their motivation and called on that MOTIVATION and their collective experience to drive down the field and score the game-winning touchdown.

There is a reason why the football talking heads will often say, "Any Given Sunday". It's what makes the game great!

Z-Health Master Trainer Update

Last month we had one more Z-Health trainer join the ranks of the Masters. Please join us in congratulating **Lou McGovern** on completing his outstanding work items and achieving full Master Trainer status. We are extremely proud of him!

P.S. Stay tuned for our Master Trainer special newsletter coming later this month.

Newsletter Archive

Did you miss an issue of the Monthly Newsletter? Delivered on the 15th of every month, the newsletter is filled with interviews, articles, reviews, and all of the goodness that is Z-Health Performance Solutions.

Are you receiving our Weekly Training Tips? Delivered to your inbox every Sunday, these brief training nuggets will be sure to enhance all of your activities.

Catch up on all of our [back issues](#) on the Z-Health web site or click on the "Manage your Subscription" link on the bottom of this email to ensure you are getting the latest news.