FREE COMPANION GUIDE · TACTICAL BREATH

The Tactical Breath Field Manual.

Six breath protocols used by Special Operations, first responders, and combat athletes to stay calm under fire.

Breath is the only system you can control under stress.

Rob Baard

Shihan 14th Dan · Japan-Licensed Shidoshi · Author

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Rob Baard.

Shihan 14th Dan · Japan-licensed Shidoshi.

Trained directly under **Grandmaster Masaaki Hatsumi** — the last living heir to nine ancient Japanese combat traditions.

Licensed Private Investigator. Author of the Training & Tactics series, martial arts philosophy and mind science books, and the Ninja Saga novels. Honorary PhD.

Diplomas in Clinical Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy, and NLP Master Practitioner.

IBDA Weapons Specialist. Martial Arts Alliance Certified. Kuji-In Master. Usui Reiki Master.

Award-winning filmmaker. Directed **Danny Glover** in a feature film sold across 30+ countries. Winner — **LA Film Awards, Best Documentary**. Documentary now a permanent exhibit at the **Togakushi Ninja Museum, Japan**. Australian Cinema Pioneer.

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> *The protocols in this manual are the ones I use myself.*

THE DOCTRINE

Override the Body.

Under stress the body runs two competing systems. Both are automatic. Both are powerful. Only one of them lets you fight, swim, shoot, decide, or speak with control.

Sympathetic dominance: heart rate up, blood to the limbs, vision narrows, fine motor drops, breath shallow and high. Useful for ten seconds. Costly after sixty.

Parasympathetic dominance: heart rate down, blood to the gut and brain, vision opens, fine motor returns, breath slow and low in the diaphragm. Decisions, aim, and recovery live here.

You cannot will your heart rate down. You cannot order the adrenaline to stop. You cannot tell your hands to stop shaking. But you can change your breath — and the moment you do, every other system follows.

> *When the body is in chaos, the breath is the override switch.*

The Six Protocols

Each protocol below is field-tested. None require equipment. None take more than five minutes. Train them in order.

— **Box Breathing.** 4-4-4-4 — the Special Operations standard.

— **Long Exhale Reset.** 4-8 — fastest parasympathetic activation.

— **Tactical Breath Hold.** 4-8-4-2 — CO_2 tolerance for swimming and combat.

— **Combat Recovery Breath.** Six cycles — post-action heart-rate drop.

— **Pre-Engagement Breath.** Three breaths, one hold, go.

— **Coherent Breathing.** 5.5 in / 5.5 out — the resonance frequency.

PROTOCOL 1 OF 6

Box Breathing.

4 — 4 — 4 — 4.

Used by Navy SEALs, US Special Operations, tactical police, and ER physicians. The first breath protocol an operator learns. Used before high-stakes action, before a breach, before a difficult conversation. Anywhere arousal must drop without alertness dropping with it.

HOW TO DO IT

— Sit or stand. Spine tall. Shoulders down.

— Inhale through the nose for four.

— Hold the breath in for four. No straining.

— Exhale through the nose or mouth for four.

— Hold the breath out for four. That is one cycle.

— Run six cycles. Two minutes total.

COMMON MISTAKE

Counting too fast. The four-count should feel slow. If you cannot hold the bottom of the cycle without panic, your inhale was too aggressive. Soften the inhale before lengthening the count.

> *The standard. Learn this one first.*

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PROTOCOL 2 OF 6

Long Exhale Reset.

4 in — 8 out.

Used by hostage negotiators, anaesthetists, and free divers between dives. The fastest way to bring the parasympathetic system online. Use it when adrenaline has already dumped — before a phone call, after a near miss, between sets, after a confrontation.

HOW TO DO IT

— Inhale through the nose for four.

— Exhale through pursed lips for eight.

— Make the exhale audible and slow. Imagine fogging a window.

— Do not force the inhale. Let it return on its own.

— Run five cycles. About one minute.

— Stop the moment the shoulders drop.

COMMON MISTAKE

Trying to fill the lungs on the inhale. The power is in the exhale. A long exhale on a half-full lung beats a long exhale on a full one. Inhale soft, exhale long.

> *The fastest way to bring the heart rate down.*

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PROTOCOL 3 OF 6

Tactical Breath Hold.

4 in — 8 hold — 4 out — 2 hold.

Used by combat swimmers, breath-hold divers, grapplers in scrambles, and fighters working CO_2 tolerance. Trains the body to stop fearing the urge to breathe — the same urge that triggers panic underwater, on the ground, or at altitude.

HOW TO DO IT

— Inhale through the nose for four. Comfortable, not maximum.

— Hold the breath in for eight. Stay relaxed in the throat and jaw.

— Exhale through the nose for four.

— Hold the breath out for two. That is one cycle.

— Run four cycles.

— If the urge spikes, soften the jaw and continue. Never push past genuine distress.

COMMON MISTAKE

Holding with a closed throat or tense chest. The hold must feel like a pause, not a clamp. A clamp builds panic. A pause builds tolerance. If your face is going red, you are clamping.

> *Trains the body to stop fearing the urge to breathe.*

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PROTOCOL 4 OF 6

Combat Recovery Breath.

Nose in — mouth out — six cycles.

Used by boxers between rounds, grapplers off the mat, soldiers immediately post-action. The fastest known reset between bouts of high output. The first sixty seconds after the work stops.

HOW TO DO IT

— Stop moving. Hands on the head or hips. Head up.

— Inhale through the nose, full and slow, for around four seconds.

— Exhale through the mouth, longer than the inhale, for around six.

— Do not gasp. Do not bend forward.

— Six cycles. About one minute.

— If still elevated, switch to Long Exhale Reset for one more minute.

COMMON MISTAKE

Bending double, hands on the knees. It feels right. It is wrong. It compresses the diaphragm and slows recovery. Stay upright. Open the chest. The recovery is faster.

> *The fastest known reset between rounds.*

PROTOCOL 5 OF 6

Pre-Engagement Breath.

Three breaths — one hold — go.

Used by free divers entering the water, fighters walking to the cage, shooters pre-trigger, performers stepping on stage. The final ten seconds before action — used to set arousal at exactly the level the task demands. Calm. Ready.

HOW TO DO IT

— Three slow, full breaths. Nose in, mouth out. About five seconds each way.

— On the third exhale, take one more comfortable inhale.

— Hold for three to five seconds. Soft hold. Quiet body.

— Picture the first move you intend to make.

— Release the breath as you commit to the move.

— Do not breathe for the first second of the action. Move first, breathe second.

COMMON MISTAKE

Hyperventilating to feel ready. Sharp breaths feel powerful but lower CO_2, narrow vision, and shorten the breath-hold window. Slow. Full. Three only.

> *Used by free divers, fighters, and performers at the moment of go.*

PROTOCOL 6 OF 6

Coherent Breathing.

5.5 in — 5.5 out.

Used by US military resilience programs, first responder stress training, HeartMath-based interventions, and performance psychologists. The resonance frequency — where heart rate, breath, and blood pressure synchronise. Daily baseline training. Ten to twenty minutes a day. This is the protocol that changes your resting state, not just your acute state.

HOW TO DO IT

— Sit upright. Comfortable. No tension in the shoulders or jaw.
— Inhale through the nose for five and a half seconds.
— Exhale through the nose for five and a half seconds.
— No hold at the top. No hold at the bottom. Continuous, smooth, even.
— Around five and a half breaths per minute. The resonance rate.
— Run for ten minutes minimum. Twenty for full effect.

COMMON MISTAKE

Over-breathing. Coherent breathing is about pace, not volume. Big chest breaths break the rhythm, drop CO_2, and create lightheadedness. Keep the breaths quiet, low in the diaphragm, and only as deep as is comfortable. The pace does the work, not the size.

> *The resonance frequency. Where heart rate, breath, and blood pressure synchronise.*

THE PROGRAM

The 7-Day Protocol.

Five minutes a day. Seven days. One protocol per day, in this order. Run this once and you keep all six for life.

Day 1 **Box Breathing (4-4-4-4).**

Six cycles, twice. Morning and evening. Learn the rhythm.

Day 2 **Long Exhale Reset (4-8).**

Five cycles, three times. After waking, after lunch, before sleep.

Day 3 **Tactical Breath Hold (4-8-4-2).**

Four cycles, once. Build tolerance. Stay relaxed in the hold.

Day 4 **Combat Recovery Breath.**

After any physical effort. Hands up. Six cycles. Note the recovery time.

Day 5 **Pre-Engagement Breath.**

Use it before three different events today.

Day 6 **Coherent Breathing (5.5 in / 5.5 out).**

Ten to twenty minutes. The resonance frequency. Build the long-term baseline.

Day 7 **Integration.**

Run all six in sequence. About eight minutes total. The system is yours.

> *Five minutes a day. The cost of admission to controlling your physiology under stress.*

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GET THE BOOKS

The Rob Baard Library.

Tactical Breath sits inside a wider system. The breath is the entry point. The full library covers the rest — mind, movement, weapons, philosophy, and the lineage behind it.

Stealth & Camouflage
The Complete Manual of Invisibility — stay unseen.

Escape & Evasion
Surviving Capture and Pursuit — once contact begins.

Tactical Knife Fighting & Defence
The complete manual — last-resort response.

Fists & Philosophy
Martial arts, mind, and the discipline of the warrior.

The Ninja Saga — Book 1: Ninja Prelude
Origin novel of the Ninja Saga universe.

The Ninja Saga — Book 2: Ninja Infinite Ways
The journey deepens.

> ***Movement. Mindset. Mastery.***

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