

Risk Assessment: Breathwork Session Seated on Pool Edge With Feet in Water

Facilitator: Evan Gill - Elite Performance Through Breath

Date completed: 10/06/2026 **Review date:** 20/06/2026 **Venue:** P3 Stafford

Session type: Seated, guided breath awareness and nervous system regulation session. Participants sit on the edge of the pool with feet and lower legs in the water only.

1. Activity Details

Activity name	Breathwork session beside pool
Location	Poolside area
Participant position	Seated on the edge of the pool with feet dangling in the water
Water use	Feet and lower legs only. No full-body water entry during the session
Exercises included	Baseline Breath Awareness, The Downshift Breath, Steady State Breathing, Grounding Breath

2. Activity Overview

Participants will sit on the edge of the pool with their feet dangling in the water while completing gentle guided breathing exercises.

No participant will stand, walk, swim, submerge, float, lie down, lean back, or enter the pool fully during the breathwork session.

Because participants are seated directly beside water with feet in the pool, the overall risk is higher than a standard seated breathwork session conducted in a dry indoor space. Key risks include falling into the pool, dizziness near water, slipping on wet surfaces, anxiety or panic, loss of balance, and delayed emergency response.

The session must remain gentle, seated, controlled, and low-intensity. It must not include rapid breathing, hyperventilation, extended breath holds, forced breathing, maximum inhales, breath retention challenges, underwater breathwork, or pushing through discomfort.

3. Overall Risk Rating

Initial risk rating: High

Residual risk rating after controls: Medium

The activity may proceed only if all controls are followed strictly. If participants cannot be safely seated at the pool edge, if the surface is slippery, if supervision is inadequate, or if a participant appears unwell or anxious around water, the session must be moved away from the pool edge to a dry seated area.

4. Participant Suitability

This session is intended for adults participating in a guided, low-intensity wellbeing and performance breathing session. Participants should not take part without medical clearance if they have, or suspect they may have:

- A significant respiratory or cardiovascular condition
- A history of fainting, blackouts, seizures, or epilepsy
- Severe asthma or breathing difficulty
- Recent surgery or injury
- Pregnancy-related concerns
- Severe anxiety, panic disorder, trauma responses, or distress around water
- Any condition where altered breathing may create risk
- Any medical advice to avoid breathwork, breath control, or poolside activities

Participants may opt out at any time without needing to explain.

5. Key Safety Rules

- Participants remain seated on the pool edge.
- Feet and lower legs may be in the water only.

- No full-body water entry during the breathwork.
- No standing, walking, lying down, leaning back, swimming, floating, submerging, or holding onto the pool wall during breathwork.
- No underwater breathwork.
- No hyperventilation, rapid breathing, forced deep breathing, maximum inhales, competitive breathing, or pushing through discomfort.
- Eyes may remain open at all times. A soft open gaze is preferred.
- Participants can stop immediately and return to normal breathing at any time.
- Participants must not swim immediately after the session if they feel light-headed, unusually relaxed, tired, emotional, unsteady, dizzy, or disconnected.

6. Required Control Measures

Before the session

- Inspect the pool edge and surrounding area.
- Confirm the pool edge is suitable for seated participation and there is enough space between participants.
- Check for slippery surfaces, puddles, algae, loose tiles, uneven edges, or unstable seating areas.
- Remove trip hazards including bags, towels, bottles, shoes, mats, and cords.
- Keep a clear access path for emergency response.
- Confirm venue emergency procedures, first aid kit location, phone access, and whether a lifeguard, venue staff member, or second adult is present.
- Know the exact venue address in case emergency services are required.
- Brief participants on safety rules and verbally screen for major concerns.
- Tell participants that all practices are optional and they must stop if dizzy, anxious, breathless, panicked, nauseous, light-headed, unsteady, or uncomfortable.

During the session

- Actively observe participants at all times and stand where the whole group can be seen.
- Keep instructions simple, calm, practical, and grounded.
- Keep all breathing gentle.
- Avoid intense emotional language, deep trance language, or encouraging participants to disconnect from their surroundings.
- Encourage open eyes or a soft gaze.
- Watch for dizziness, distress, panic, numbness, tingling, pale skin, sweating, confusion, or instability.
- Stop or modify the exercise immediately if any participant appears uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Keep the group seated until everyone has returned to normal breathing and feels steady.

7. Risk Matrix

This risk matrix is used to rate each hazard before and after control measures are applied. Risk score is calculated as Likelihood x Consequence = Risk Score.

Rating	Likelihood	Description
1	Rare	May occur only in exceptional circumstances
2	Unlikely	Could occur, but is not expected
3	Possible	Might occur during the activity
4	Likely	Will probably occur in some circumstances
5	Almost certain	Expected to occur frequently or repeatedly

Rating	Consequence	Description
1	Insignificant	No injury or only minor discomfort
2	Minor	Minor injury, mild distress, or short-term discomfort
3	Moderate	Medical attention may be required, significant distress, or temporary incapacity
4	Major	Serious injury, major medical event, hospital treatment, or rescue required
5	Severe	Life-threatening event, permanent injury, or fatality

Consequence / Likelihood	1 Rare	2 Unlikely	3 Possible	4 Likely	5 Almost certain
1 Insignificant	1 Low	2 Low	3 Low	4 Low	5 Medium
2 Minor	2 Low	4 Low	6 Medium	8 Medium	10 Medium
3 Moderate	3 Low	6 Medium	9 Medium	12 High	15 High
4 Major	4 Low	8 Medium	12 High	16 High	20 Extreme
5 Severe	5 Medium	10 Medium	15 High	20 Extreme	25 Extreme

Score	Risk level	Action required
1 to 4	Low	Manage through normal supervision and standard safety controls
5 to 10	Medium	Additional controls required. Monitor during the activity
11 to 16	High	Strong controls required. Activity must not proceed unless controls are in place
17 to 25	Extreme	Activity must not proceed unless the risk can be reduced

8. Risk Assessment Table

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk
Participant falls into the pool	Participants	High	Participants remain seated only. Feet and lower legs in water only. No standing, leaning back, lying down, or movement during breathwork. Adequate spacing. Facilitator actively observes.	Medium
Dizziness or light-headedness near water	Participants	High	Gentle breathing only. No rapid breathing, hyperventilation, forced deep breathing, or extended breath holds. Participants stop immediately if symptoms occur. Eyes open or soft gaze encouraged.	Medium
Short breath pause during Grounding Breath causes discomfort	Participants	Medium	The 2-second pause is optional and described as a soft pause, not a forced hold. Participants may skip the pause and use 4 in, 6 out. No bracing or pressure.	Low to medium
Participant faints or becomes unwell	Participants	High	Participants remain seated. Facilitator monitors group. Medical screening and opt-out briefing provided. First aid kit and phone available. Emergency procedures known.	Medium
Slipping while approaching or leaving pool edge	Participants and facilitator	Medium to high	Inspect and dry area where practical. Move slowly. No rushing. Keep belongings away from pool edge. Use suitable footwear before and after sitting.	Low to medium
Trips over bags, towels, shoes, bottles, or equipment	Participants and facilitator	Medium	Keep all personal items away from session area. Maintain clear access paths. No loose cords or clutter.	Low
Anxiety or panic response	Participants	Medium to high	Clear safety briefing. Participation optional. Eyes open option. Participants may stop at any time. Facilitator uses calm, grounded language. Move participant away from pool edge if needed and safe.	Low to medium
Loss of balance from closing eyes	Participants	Medium	Eyes open or soft gaze preferred. Eyes closed is optional only if participant feels stable. Hands may rest beside body for support. No leaning back.	Low
Participant over-controls or forces breath	Participants	Medium	Cue soft inhale, gentle exhale, no maximum breath, no strain. Counting can be dropped if it creates pressure.	Low
Participant enters pool after breathwork while light-headed or altered	Participants	Medium to high	No immediate swimming after practice if anyone feels light-headed, tired, emotional, unusually relaxed, dizzy, or unsteady. Facilitator checks in before transition.	Low to medium
Poor supervision due to large group size	Participants	High	Group size must allow active observation. Use a second adult, venue staff member, or lifeguard where possible. Move to dry area if supervision is inadequate.	Medium
Heat, sun exposure, or dehydration	Participants and facilitator	Medium	Use shade where possible. Provide drinking water. Avoid extreme heat. Encourage sun protection if outdoors. Monitor for overheating.	Low
Environmental distraction or noise	Participants	Low to medium	Choose a quiet area where possible. Keep participants facing away from unnecessary distractions. Pause session if environment becomes unsafe.	Low
Delayed emergency response	Participants	High	Phone, first aid kit, venue support, and emergency access available. Facilitator knows venue procedures and exact location.	Medium

9. Applied Risk Matrix for This Session

Hazard	Init L	Init C	Init score	Init rating	Res L	Res C	Res score	Res rating
Participant falls into the pool	3	4	12	High	2	4	8	Medium
Dizziness or light-headedness near water	3	4	12	High	2	4	8	Medium
Short breath pause during Grounding Breath causes discomfort	3	3	9	Medium	2	3	6	Medium
Participant faints or becomes unwell	3	4	12	High	2	4	8	Medium
Slipping while approaching or leaving pool edge	3	3	9	Medium	2	3	6	Medium
Trips over bags, towels, shoes, bottles, or equipment	3	2	6	Medium	1	2	2	Low
Anxiety or panic response	3	3	9	Medium	2	3	6	Medium
Loss of balance from closing eyes	3	3	9	Medium	1	3	3	Low
Participant over-controls or forces breath	3	2	6	Medium	1	2	2	Low
Participant enters pool after breathwork while light-headed or altered	3	4	12	High	2	4	8	Medium
Poor supervision due to large group size	3	4	12	High	2	4	8	Medium
Heat, sun exposure, or dehydration	3	2	6	Medium	1	2	2	Low
Environmental distraction or noise	2	2	4	Low	1	2	2	Low
Delayed emergency response	3	4	12	High	2	4	8	Medium

The highest-risk factors in this session relate to the poolside environment rather than the breathwork itself. The main risk is that a participant may become dizzy, unsteady, anxious, or faint while seated directly beside water.

After controls, the overall residual risk is rated as Medium. This activity may proceed only if all controls are in place and the facilitator can safely monitor every participant.

10. Participant Safety Briefing

The facilitator should read the following before starting:

"This session will be done seated on the edge of the pool with feet in the water only. No one will stand, swim, submerge, lie down, lean back, or enter the pool during the breathwork."

"Because we are beside water, safety comes first. Keep your body steady. You can keep your eyes open the whole time. You can use your hands beside your hips for support."

"Nothing today involves forced breathing, rapid breathing, underwater breathwork, or pushing through discomfort. One exercise may include a short pause after the inhale, but that pause is optional. It is not a forced breath hold. If the pause creates pressure, discomfort, dizziness, anxiety, or breathlessness, skip it and move straight into the exhale."

"If you feel dizzy, anxious, light-headed, nauseous, breathless, uncomfortable, or unsteady at any point, stop immediately, return to normal breathing, keep your eyes open, and let me know."

11. Emergency Procedure

If a participant feels dizzy, faint, panicked, unwell, or distressed

1. Stop the practice immediately.
2. Ask the participant to keep their eyes open.
3. Ask the participant to return to normal breathing.
4. Keep them seated and stable if safe to do so.
5. Do not allow them to stand quickly.
6. Do not allow them to swim or enter the pool fully.
7. Assist them away from the pool edge only when it is safe.
8. Provide support, water, and first aid if appropriate.
9. Contact venue staff, lifeguard, or support person if available.
10. Call emergency services if symptoms are severe, worsening, or do not resolve quickly.
11. Record the incident after the session.

If a participant falls into the pool

1. Stop the session immediately.
2. Alert venue staff, lifeguard, or emergency support person.
3. Follow the venue water rescue procedure.
4. Do not place other participants at risk.
5. Call emergency services if required.
6. Do not continue the session until the incident has been managed and the area is safe.

12. Required Equipment

- Stable, safe pool edge seating area
- Drinking water
- First aid kit
- Mobile phone
- Emergency contact details
- Clear emergency access path
- Shade or weather protection if outdoors
- Towel or drying equipment if needed
- Venue emergency procedure
- Support person, venue staff member, or lifeguard where possible

13. Exclusions and Restrictions

- Full-body pool entry during breathwork
- Swimming, floating, or submerging during breathwork
- Underwater breathwork
- Breathwork while standing, walking, or lying down beside the pool
- Extended breath holds or breath-holding challenges
- Hyperventilation, rapid breathing, Wim Hof style breathing, forced deep breathing, or maximum inhale practices
- Competitive or endurance breathing drills
- Any practice that encourages pushing through discomfort
- Swimming immediately after breathwork if a participant feels dizzy, light-headed, unusually relaxed, emotional, tired, or unsteady

14. Facilitator Competency Requirements

- Lead low-intensity breath awareness and regulation practices safely
- Recognise signs of dizziness, distress, panic, or discomfort
- Modify or stop exercises immediately
- Maintain clear boundaries around pool use
- Deliver a clear safety briefing
- Manage group behaviour near water
- Follow venue emergency procedures
- Access first aid and emergency support quickly

Where possible, a second adult, venue staff member, or lifeguard should be present because the session occurs directly beside water.

15. Final Approval

This activity may proceed only if the pool edge is safe and suitable, participants are seated and stable, participants remain out of the pool except for feet and lower legs, the facilitator can observe everyone, no breathwork is performed underwater or while swimming, the Grounding Breath pause remains optional, emergency support is available, and participants understand they can stop at any time.

Approved by	
Role	
Signature	
Date	
Review date	