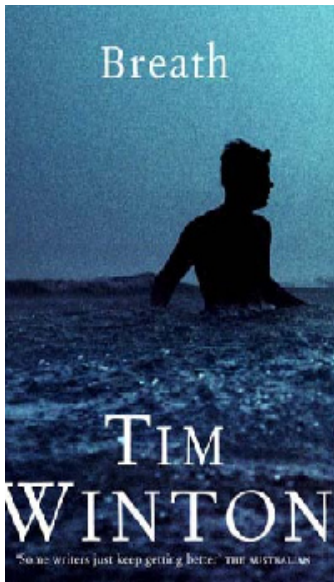


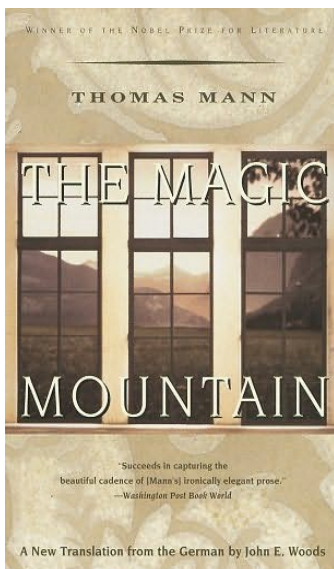
Taking Breath

Medical students training today have grown up in a time where the landscape of healthcare is shaped by scientific research. They are also destined to practice at a time when patients expect more emotional engagement from physicians than ever before. In the over-crowded medical curriculum, where many students feel a nagging sense of guilt as soon as they pick up a book that's not 'medicine', sometimes it's refreshing to look at things from a different perspective. The books, poems and films listed below are for you to take or leave as you wish. Some of the suggestions put medicine and illness into a historical or cultural context; others are examples of the growing body of literature based on patients' stories, which often give challenging insights into the impact of a condition that can't be found in the textbooks. All of them offer a chance to take a breath, step back and think about science, medicine and healing in a different way. Hope you enjoy them.



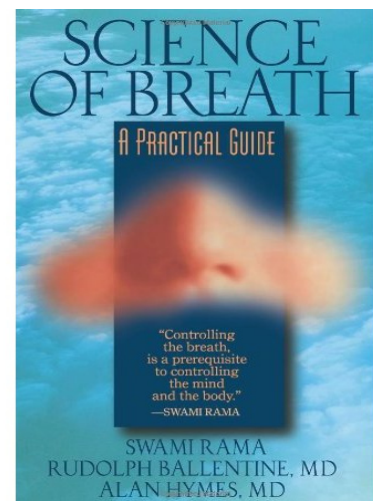
Breath Tim Winton

This exciting novel is narrated by paramedic Bruce Pike, looking back on his adolescence. He and his friend Loonie practise holding their breath to instil panic into tourists who think they've drowned. But when they hook up with hippie surfer Sandy, things become a lot more serious. Winton describes the air-depriving effects of water in lyrical yet chilling detail. The audiobook version, read by Dan Wyllie, is superb: it captures the Australian cadence and brings out all the nuances in the story of beauty and fear.



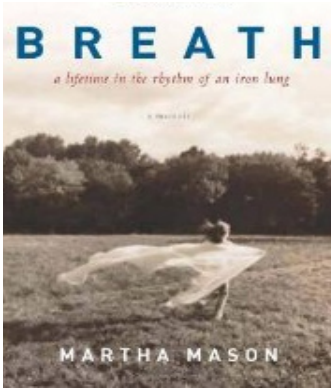
The Magic Mountain Thomas Mann

This classic novel tells the story of Hans Castorp who visits his tubercular cousin at a Swiss sanatorium. Hans becomes acculturated into the community and ends up staying for 7 years. This is a sweeping novel, in spite of its narrow geography, which explores aspects of community, ritual, politics and philosophy. Written at the beginning of the 20th century, it is a book which remains well worth reading, despite its heft.



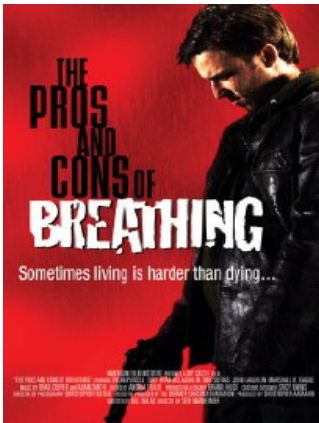
Science of Breath Swami Rama et al.

This readable book explores a variety of aspects of breathing, including anatomy and mechanics as well as cultural influences. More accessible than a text book, but just as informative, it gives an overview of all things respiratory. The text includes yoga exercises that readers have found helped to increase lung capacity. This book will also be useful to those interested in the meeting of Eastern and Western approaches to medicine.



Breath
Marina Masun

This is a memoir of a woman who spent 61 years in an iron lung, after contracting polio at the age of 12. It is an uplifting insight into how to make the most of life in spite of restricted physical circumstances. Masun writes with style and wit about her extraordinary life.



The Pros and Cons of Breathing
Dir: Seth Manheimer

This award-winning 22-minute film, described as 'noir meets science', is about a young man with cystic fibrosis who must decide between waiting for a transplant or dice with death as a gangster. Watch it at http://scienceandfilm.org/films.php?film_id=162



Breathing Room
Dan Steinhilber

Created in 2010, this interactive artwork consists of billowing plastic walls that are controlled by fans that suck in and then release the sides. The artist describes it as "a kinetic experience — the body is an architectural element in the space". Much of Steinhilber's work invokes breathing. He often works with inflation and deflation to create a sense of working lungs.



Breathing sculpture
Jaume Plensa

This memorial, dedicated to journalists who have died covering the news in war zones, is called 'Breathing' because of the breath of life that journalism brings to the nation. Standing 10 m high on the top of Broadcasting House, it sends a beam of light 900 m into the sky at 10 pm every night. The sculpture also features a poem by James Fenton. It was unveiled in 2008.

Singing for Breathing

These workshops aim to complement physiotherapeutic support for respiratory conditions by introducing a new form of enjoyable, informal exercise. They lead to better understanding of breath control through the use of the voice.

Regular workshops are held at Royal Brompton Hospital and the Harefield Hospital. Find out more on the Arts section of the Royal Brompton's website: www.rbht.nhs.uk/arts

Breath is enough
Robert William Service

I draw sweet air
Deeply and long,
As pure as prayer,
As sweet as song.
Where lilies glow
And roses wreath,
Heart-joy I know
Is just to breathe.

Aye, so I think
By shore or sea,
As deep I drink
Of purity.
This brave machine,
Bare to the buff,
I keep ice-clean,
Breath is enough.

From mountain stream
To covert cool
The world, I deem,
Is wonderful;
The great, the small,
The smooth, the rough,
I love it all, –
Breath is enough.

From: *Rhymes for My Rags*
(1956)