

Lung Function Overview



SIMPLYAWARE
Wellness & Training Center

1719 Analog Drive
Richardson, Texas 75081
Ph. 214-476-1719

Biomedical / Western Physiology: The lungs facilitate gas exchange, oxygenating the blood and removing carbon dioxide. They play a vital role in acid–base regulation, immune defense, and inflammatory signaling through the respiratory mucosa. Lung function directly influences energy production, endurance, and systemic vitality. Efficient respiration supports cardiovascular performance and nervous system regulation.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM): The Lungs govern Qi and respiration and are the primary interface between the body and the external environment. They regulate the dispersing and descending of Qi and fluids, control the skin and pores, and oversee Wei Qi (defensive immunity). The Lungs open to the nose and house the Po (corporeal soul), which governs instinct, sensation, and embodied presence. They are most affected by grief and sadness.

Five Element Theory (Metal Element): The Lungs represent refinement, boundaries, structure, and the process of letting go. Associated with autumn, Metal governs discernment and release—taking in what is essential and releasing what is no longer needed. Balanced Metal supports clarity, dignity, and healthy boundaries. Imbalance leads to rigidity, detachment, or unresolved grief.

Emotional and Psychological Functions: The Lungs govern the capacity to process loss, establish boundaries, and remain open to life. Healthy Lung function supports acceptance, inspiration, and emotional clarity. Imbalance may manifest as prolonged grief, sadness, emotional withdrawal, or difficulty receiving support.

Energetic and Nervous System Correlates: Lung Qi is closely tied to breath rhythm and autonomic regulation. Shallow or restricted breathing patterns reflect and reinforce anxiety, collapse, or chronic stress. Healthy Lung energy supports parasympathetic activation, rhythmic regulation, and a sense of spaciousness in the body.

Developmental and Functional Role: The Lungs shape early embodied experience, influencing how individuals relate to the world through sensation, breath, and boundaries. Repeated experiences of loss, threat, or constriction can impair Lung function over time.

Spiritual and Existential Dimension: The Lungs relate to inspiration, impermanence, and the rhythm of giving and receiving life. Balanced Lung energy supports reverence for life cycles and the capacity to let go with grace. When compromised, there may be despair, disconnection, or loss of meaning.

Lung Function: Cross-Modal Comparative Chart

Framework	Primary Functions	Key Associations	Imbalance Indicators	Healthy Expression
Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)	Governs Qi and respiration; disperses and descends; regulates Wei Qi (immunity)	Skin, pores, nose; emotion: grief; spirit: Po (corporeal soul)	Weak immunity, breath restriction, unresolved grief	Strong Qi, clear boundaries, rhythmic breathing
Five Element Theory (Metal)	Refinement, boundaries, letting go, structure	Season: Autumn; movement: inward/refining; quality: clarity	Rigidity, detachment, prolonged grief	Discernment, inspiration, appropriate release
Western Biomedicine	Gas exchange; oxygen delivery; immune defense; acid-base regulation	Lungs, bronchi, alveoli	Asthma, infections, fatigue	Efficient respiration, immune resilience
Neuroendocrine / Stress Physiology	Breath-mediated autonomic regulation	Vagal tone, rhythm, parasympathetic activation	Shallow breathing, anxiety	Regulated breath, nervous system balance
Ayurveda	Governs Prana Vayu; breath and nervous movement	Vata dosha, chest, breath	Anxiety, dryness, weakness	Vitality, adaptability, inspiration
Somatic Psychology / Trauma Theory	Boundary awareness; grief processing	Chest expansion/constriction	Collapse, constriction, dissociation	Breath capacity, presence, openness
Psychological / Emotional	Processing loss; boundary formation	Grief vs. acceptance	Detachment, fear of closeness	Acceptance, openness to life
Spiritual / Existential	Inspiration and impermanence	Breath of life	Despair, disconnection	Reverence, rhythmic presence

Important note: Across paradigms, Lung function consistently relates to exchange, boundaries, and the rhythm of taking in and letting go. Disturbance most often arises from unresolved grief, prolonged constriction, or loss of rhythmic regulation rather than isolated respiratory weakness.