

# RESPIRATORY EXERCISES

## Exercise and asthma

Exercise helps to: <sup>1</sup>

- Strengthen the muscles used in breathing
- Boost the immune system
- Maintain a healthy body weight.

All these factors help to improve and control asthma in the long run.



## Exercise and COPD

Regular exercise improves breathing, reduces severity of symptoms and improves overall quality of life of individuals with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).<sup>2</sup>

## Starting an exercise regimen in asthma patients<sup>1</sup>

- Exercise only when your asthma is under control.
- Keep your inhaler handy during exercise
- Warm up slowly with stretching or walking before you begin exercising.
- Do not stop exercising all of a sudden. Cool down slowly for at least 10 minutes.

## What to do if you are feeling short of breath.

If you are feeling short of breath, sit in one of the following comfortable positions.



Sit with your back against the back of a chair, with head and shoulders rolled forward and relaxed downwards



Sit on a chair with arms folded and resting on a pillow in front. Rest your head on your arms.



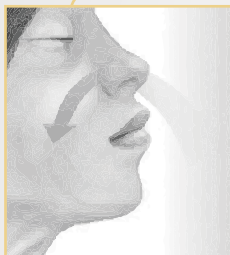
Sit with your back against the back of a chair, with head and shoulders rolled forward and relaxed downwards

Once you are in a comfortable position, breathe in through the nose and blow out air through the mouth.

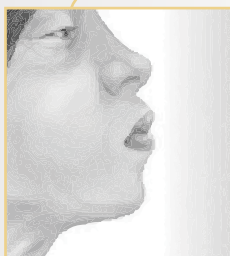
Do this fast, and then gradually slow down your breathing and then breathe in and out through your nose. <sup>3</sup>

# Breathing exercises that help in COPD

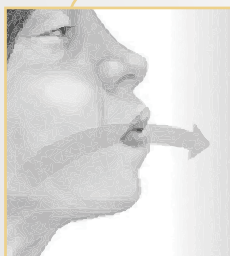
## Pursed-lip breathing:<sup>4</sup>



**Step 1: Keep your mouth closed and breathe in normally through your nose.**



**Step 2: Purse your lips such that you are whistling or softly blowing the flame of a candle.**



**Step 3: Keeping your lips pursed, blow out the air through your mouth without straining yourself.**

## Diaphragmatic breathing:<sup>4</sup>

- Step 1:** Sit comfortably in a chair and starting with the shoulders, relax your whole body.
- Step 2:** Place your hands lightly on your stomach.
- Step 3:** Breathe in slowly through your nose, and feel your stomach rise under your hands as you do so
- Step 4:** Breathe out slowly through pursed lips, and feel the stomach go inward as you do this.

## Yoga

Breath control techniques like “pranayam” can help a person with COPD to breathe more easily and allow more strenuous exercise. Yoga also promotes relaxation, and may help to relieve the emotional stress associated with COPD.

- Sitting in a comfortable position, breathe in through one nostril and hold the breath
- Breathe out through the other nostril

Repeat these two steps to regulate your breathing. Alternate between the nostrils used to breathe in and out.



### References

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6. Bhalla P. Seven steps to self realization. Peacock Books, 2009