

COPD: Breathing Training

When you have COPD trying to breathe in and out normally doesn't get enough oxygen into your body and carbon dioxide out.

But you can learn ways to breathe that can help you get more carbon dioxide out and more oxygen in. In short, you'll feel better and be able to do more.

One of the skills to help you breathe better is pursed lip breathing.

When you breathe out with pursed lips, you keep your airways open longer.

This removes more stale air from your lungs and helps relieve shortness of breath.

To do pursed lip breathing, breathe in through your nose for a count of two. Keep your mouth closed.

Now purse your lips as if you were going to whistle and slowly exhale.

"The reason for that is it gives you an opportunity to get more oxygen in"

Diaphragmatic breathing is another skill that pushes carbon dioxide out of your lungs.

Here, you retrain the diaphragm, the strongest of the breathing muscles, to squeeze stale air out.

Here is how you do it.

First sit or lie down.

Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.

Breathe in slowly through your nose.

You should feel your stomach expanding as you breathe in, your chest shouldn't move.

Exhale slowly, about twice as long as your inhale.

Now, take a few moments to practice pursed lip and diaphragmatic breathing together.

First breathe out through pursed lips.

Now, breathe in through your nose for a count of two. You should feel your belly expand as your diaphragm lowers and your lungs fill with air.

Keep your mouth closed.

Now purse your lips as if you were going to whistle and slowly exhale for a count of six.

Don't worry if you don't get this right away, or if you can't reach the goal of breathing out for 6 seconds right away. Keep practicing.

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As you start to use these skills, try to do them together for a few minutes three to four times a day.

With practice, they will become second nature.

Use these breathing skills during all your daily activities.

They can make a big difference in how well you can do even the smallest tasks.

Pursed lip and diaphragmatic breathing can boost your energy and help you avoid shortness of breath more often.