

COPD: Exercises for Building Strength

If you have COPD, exercise may help you feel better.

Building up your strength and endurance can help you be more active, and it may reduce your shortness of breath.

But be careful. Start exercising slowly and gradually.

For each exercise, count how many times you can do it before you are mildly out of breath.

Then rest and move on to the next exercise.

Each week, increase the amount of time you do them or how many you do.

Here are some exercises you can try ...

Start with some leg lifts ... Sit in a chair with your feet slightly apart.

Breathe out as you lift one leg straight up so that the knee rises toward your shoulder.

Breathe in as you return your foot to the floor. Switch to your other leg.

Next, try some step-ups ...

Start on some stairs that have a rail you can hold.

Breathe out as you take one step up.

Breathe in as you step back down. Repeat with the other leg.

Now, try some arm extensions ...

Start with your arms by your sides.

Breathe out as you raise one arm to shoulder height, keeping the arm straight and pointing to the side.

Breathe in as you return the arm to your side.

And elbow circles are next ...

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Sit or stand with your feet slightly apart.

Place your hands on your shoulders with your elbows at shoulder level and pointing out.

Slowly make a circle with your elbows.

Breathe out as you start the circle, and breathe in as you complete the circle.

Reverse the direction.

Remember, it's always a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

So give your doctor a call, or talk about exercises at your next appointment.