

Breathing Techniques for COPD

Breathlessness is a common symptom of COPD. Breathing techniques can help reduce your feelings of breathlessness and allow you to get the oxygen you need. There are two breathing techniques: pursed-lip breathing and breathing from your diaphragm. Try to remain relaxed when you do your breathing techniques.

Pursed-Lip Breathing

1. Start with breathing in through your nose for about 2-3 seconds.
2. When you exhale, breathe out of your mouth for about 4 seconds slowly. Your lips should be pursed, like you are trying to blow out a candle.
3. Keep breathing in through your nose and exhaling out through your mouth slowly for a couple of minutes.

The QR code below leads you to a video showing you how to do pursed-lip breathing.



Breathing from Your Diaphragm

1. Start by sitting in a chair or lying on your back. Place one hand on your stomach and your other hand on top of your chest.
2. Take a deep breath in through your nose for about 2-3 seconds. You should feel your stomach move out.
3. When you exhale, breathe out of your mouth with your lips pursed for about 4 seconds. You should take your hand on your stomach and

lightly press down as you breathe out.

4. Keep breathing in through your nose and exhaling out through your mouth slowly for a couple of minutes.

How to Conserve Energy at Home

Here are some tips to help you conserve your energy and help with breathlessness.

General

- Take rest breaks throughout the day.
- Keep a moderate pace; use slower pace if hot and humid.
- Delegate heavy work.
- Select activities that are most important to you to complete.
- Follow an exercise program.
- Sit to work instead of standing.
- Spread out tasks over the week.
- Plan workload around your best times of day.

Bathing, Showering, and Personal Care

- Use a shower bench or chair when taking a shower.
- Use an elevated toilet seat over toilet.
- Sit to dry off.
- Use a shower organizer to avoid bending and reaching.
- Use a long-handled sponge/brush to avoid bending and reaching.

Dressing

- Lay out clothes before dressing.
- Use a long-handled shoehorn and sock aid.
- Bring foot to knee to apply shoes/socks to avoid bending over.

Meal Prepping

- Try to sit down when preparing food.
- Let dishes soak rather than scrub.
- Prepare double portions and freeze half for later.
- Air dry dishes or use a dishwasher.
- Use lightweight utensils.

Shopping

- Organize grocery list by store aisle in order of walking through the store.
- Shop at less busy times.
- Use a grocery chart for support or power scooter if available.
- Request help if needed.

Housework

- Do a little work each day.
- Sit when you can to complete tasks such as ironing, folding laundry, etc.
- Use long-handled mops, dusters, dust pan to avoid bending and twisting.
- Use pick-up tongs or long handle reacher.
- Use a small hand vacuum cleaner.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 11/2022 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8263.