

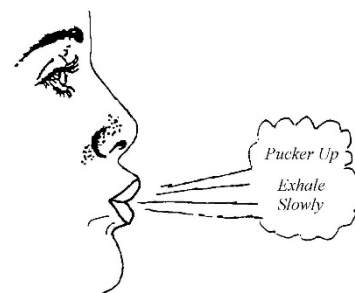
Controlled Breathing Pattern

Being short of breath can be scary. The controlled breathing pattern can help you breathe easier, increase your oxygen level, and help you relax. The pattern combines 2 ways of decreasing your shortness of breath: pursed lip breathing and diaphragmatic breathing.

Practice the controlled breathing pattern every day so you will be ready to use it when you need it. Use this technique whenever you are short of breath. You can also use it to prevent shortness of breath when you do things like exercising, climbing stairs, and bending or lifting.

Pursed Lip Breathing

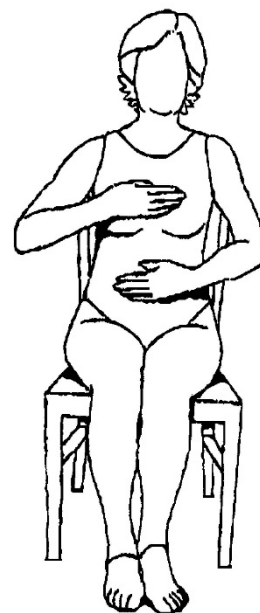
1. Breathe in slowly through your nose for 1 or 2 counts, like you are “smelling the roses.”
2. Purse (or pucker) your lips as if you were going to blow out a candle. Breathe out slowly, gently and evenly through your pursed lips. Your breath out should be 2 to 3 times longer than your breath in.



Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing

Your diaphragm is your strongest breathing muscle. Belly breathing helps you to use the diaphragm instead of the small, tense muscles in your chest and shoulders. As you are learning this technique, it may help to place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly.

1. As you breathe in through your nose, don't let your chest rise, but let your stomach expand instead
2. As you breathe out through pursed lips, slowly and evenly pull your stomach back in
3. During this process, your hand on your stomach should move, but your hand on your chest should remain almost still



Remember

- Relax your neck and shoulder muscles
- Blowing out too forcefully can lower the oxygen level in your blood

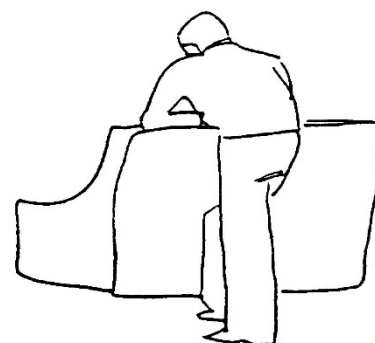
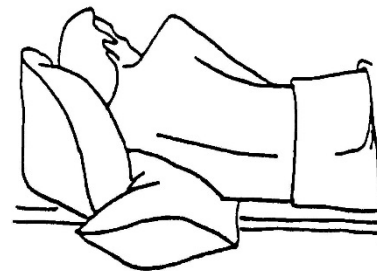
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- If you can be heard, you are working too hard

More helpful tips

In most cases, using the controlled breathing pattern is enough to get your breathing back under control. Here are some help you even more when you need it.

1. Lie on your side, with pillows supporting your head and back. Keep your back straight, not slumped.
2. Sit down and lean on your knees. Be sure to keep your shoulders relaxed and your back straight.
3. Sit down, leaning forward onto pillows that are placed on a desk or table. Support your upper chest and head. Remember to keep your shoulders relaxed and your back straight.
4. Stand and lean forward onto a chair back or counter top. Support yourself on your forearms, not your elbows. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your back straight.



Call 911 or get help right away if you find yourself so short of breath that none of these techniques are helping you.