

You Can Control Your Breathing

You can learn how to control your breathing with a little practice and help! When you have COPD, it is harder for you to breathe out. You may feel like it is hard to take a deep breath or that your chest is tight. The best thing you can do for yourself is practice breathing. **Pursed-Lip** and **Diaphragmatic (die-a-fra-ma-tic) or Belly Breathing** are 2 breathing exercises that will make it easier for you to breathe. Doing these exercises will help control the shortness of breath and anxiety you feel.

When you feel short of breath:

- Stay calm
- Take your time
- Think positive
- Do pursed-lip or belly breathing

Pursed-Lip Breathing

- will help slow down your breathing and help your lungs work better.

When to do it

- When you start to feel short of breath.
- When it feels hard to do activities.

How to do it

1. Slowly breathe in through your nose and count to 2.
2. Purse or pucker your lips just like you are blowing a whistle.
3. Breathe out through your lips slowly. Let the air come out of your mouth by itself. Take twice as long to breathe out as you did to breathe in. Slowly breathe out and count to 4.
4. Repeat.



Diaphragmatic (die-a-fra-ma-tic) or Belly Breathing

- helps you take more air into your lungs so you can breathe easier.

When to do it

- When you start to feel short of breath.
- When it feels hard to do activities.

How to do it

1. Stand or sit comfortably with good posture (sit straight up).
2. Put your hands on your sides over your lower ribs.
3. Feel your lower ribs move as you slowly breath out through pursed lips. To purse your lips, pretend you are going to whistle.
4. Breathe in through your nose slowly.
5. Rest after 3 or 4 breaths.

A black and white photograph of a man's face in profile, looking slightly upwards. A blue arrow points from his mouth towards the center, labeled "Breathe Out".

Breathe Out

A black and white photograph of a woman's face in profile, looking slightly upwards. A blue arrow points from the center towards her mouth, labeled "Breathe In".

Breathe In

QUICK TIP:

Practice these exercises when you are **not** short of breath. This will help you be ready to use the exercises when you need them.