

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

There are certain breathing techniques that can help you breathe easier. **Pursed lip breathing** and **Diaphragmatic breathing** are great ways to help you breathe when you have COPD. They are also great ways to help you breathe better when you are short of breath (can't catch your breath), during anxious times or during activities.

Pursed Lip Breathing.

To breathe through pursed lips, follow these steps:

1. Relax your neck and shoulder muscles.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose like you are going to, “smell the roses.”
3. “Purse” your lips like you are going to whistle.
4. Breathe out slowly through your pursed lips like you are gently, “blowing out a candle.”

Try to blow out twice as long as it took you to inhale.



With regular practice, this technique will get easier and become part of your everyday breathing. Pursed lip breathing and pacing yourself will help when you exercise and when climbing stairs. It may also help calm you when you feel anxious.

Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing

Breathing with your diaphragm (the dome shaped muscle under your lungs) allows you to use only one muscle instead of many, which means you will use less energy to breathe.

1. Sit down in a chair or lie down on your back.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose.
3. As you breathe in, your belly should move out so your chest can fill with air.
4. Breathe out slowly through pursed lips.
5. As you breathe out, you should feel your belly move in.

Your diaphragm moves up and down during this technique - it moves up in step 3 and down in step 5. With regular practice, this technique will get easier and become part of your everyday breathing.



Rescue Positions to Make Breathing Easier

There are sitting and standing positions that may make it easier to breathe when you have COPD.

Sitting Position

- Place both feet on the ground
- Lean your chest forward a bit
- Rest your arms on a table
- Open your legs and let your belly fall forward
- Rest your head on your arms
- Breathe through your nose and out through pursed lips to slow down your breathing



Standing Position

- Rest your elbows on a wall, a piece of furniture or on the kitchen sink
- Lean forward and put the weight on your arms
- Let your belly fall forward
- Breathe through your nose and out through pursed lips to slow down your breathing

