

COPD: Coping with Severe Shortness of Breath

Does this information apply to me? Check with your health care provider before changing your treatment.

Every morning. . .

1. If your doctor prescribed an opioid (medicine to relax your body and help with breathing), take it **before** you get out of bed so it can start working.
2. Sit on the edge of the bed and do pursed lip breathing for 5 to 6 breaths.
3. Take your reliever or rescue inhaler (blue puffer) first and remember to use your spacer device (or chamber) with it. You can use your blue or rescue puffer every 4 hours if you need it.
4. Take your other puffers and then rinse your mouth.
5. If you have one, use your oscillating or vibratory mucus-loosening device. Huff or cough to clear your chest. (See the handout called “COPD: Cough and Clear”.)

If you are more short of breath than usual (not a crisis, flare up or infection) . . .

1. Rest and practice your pursed lip breathing. Move slowly. Break activities into smaller parts.
2. If your doctor prescribed it, take your “breakthrough” dose of opioid (such as morphine syrup or tablets) every 1 to 2 hours as you need it between your regular doses. Opioids take about 30 minutes to really work, so wait 30 minutes before doing any activity.
3. Keep taking your puffers the way your doctor prescribed them.

For a breathing CRISIS or severe shortness of breath (not due to an infection) . . .

1. Sit down. Don’t talk. Lean forward with your weight through your arms or find a comfortable recovery position (see the end of this handout). Breathe as fast as you need to through an open mouth.
2. As your breathing slows down, use pursed lip breathing when you breathe out. Breathe out 2 to 3 times longer than you breathe in.
3. Turn on a fan to blow air **across** your face.
4. Use 2 puffs of your reliever or rescue inhaler (blue puffer) with the spacer device.
5. If your doctor prescribed it, increase your oxygen flow from ____ to ____ litres/min until your breathing calms down for a maximum of 10 to 15 minutes, then return the oxygen flow to your usual flow rate.
6. If your doctor prescribed it, take your “breakthrough” dose of opioid (such as morphine syrup or tablets) **or** your anxiety medicine (such as lorazepam), whichever works best for you.

Remember, you **will** recover your breathing.

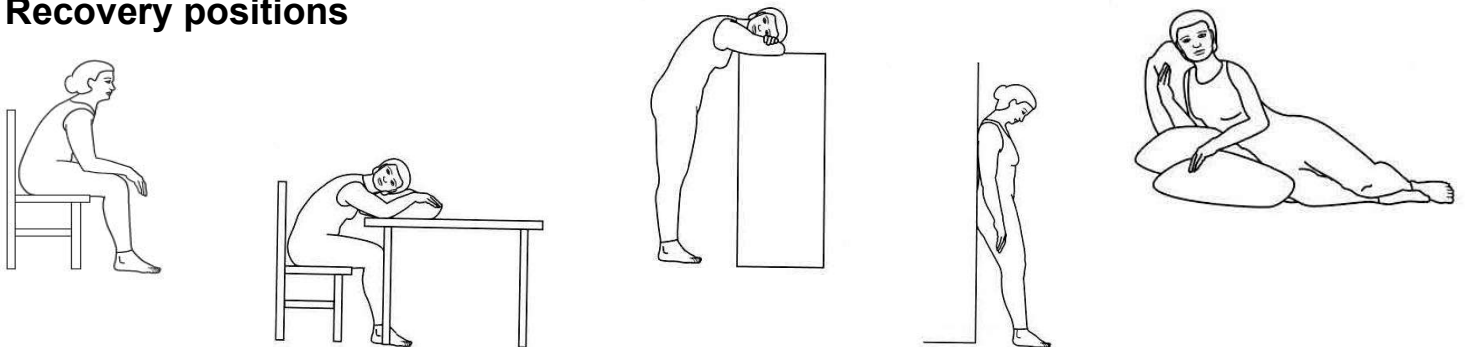
How to avoid becoming short of breath

- Limit how far you walk at one time. Take frequent rests.
- Take the stairs very slowly, pausing after every couple of steps to catch your breath.
- Pace yourself. Break down activities into smaller tasks and rest between each task.
- Wear your oxygen when bathing or showering. Use a terry towel robe after bathing instead of drying yourself with a towel.
- Eat smaller meals more often throughout the day if eating a big meal makes you breathless.
- Use equipment to get around easier (such as a 4-wheeled walker, stair climber, tub lift, bath seat, wheelchair for longer distances).
- Avoid things that make your breathing worse such as cigarette smoke, perfume, air fresheners, or bending over.
- Use pursed lip breathing when you are moving around or resting.

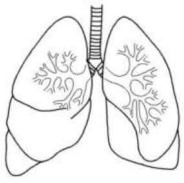
How to feel better when you're short of breath

- Lightly mist your face with a misting bottle filled with water and sit with the fan blowing across your face. This makes breathing feel easier.
- A cool-mist humidifier can help you breathe easier. If you don't have one, a bowl of ice placed in front of the fan can help.
- Open a window to get some air flow if you don't have a fan (even in the winter).
- Don't talk until your breathing crisis is over. Talking can make you more breathless.
- If someone is with you, ask them to massage your upper shoulders, between your shoulder blades, and down your arms, for 4 to 5 minutes. This can relax your muscles and let your chest move more freely.
- If people seem to be crowding you when you can't breathe, wave them back with one hand so you feel like you have space. This can help you to breathe easier.

Recovery positions



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If you have questions, talk with your doctor or appropriate healthcare professional.*



COPD: Cough and Clear

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Your airway can get blocked with thick, sticky sputum (also called mucus or phlegm). This makes it harder to breathe. Too much sputum in your lungs can lead to infections. Coughing helps remove sputum from your lungs.

If your sputum is too thick it can be harder to cough up. You can thin your sputum by drinking more fluids such as water and juice. Try to avoid alcohol and caffeine because they can dehydrate you and make your sputum thicker. Move around often to help move your sputum. Try not to stay in bed for long periods of time.

Techniques to help clear sputum from your lungs

A. Controlled cough technique:

1. Sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the ground.
2. Lean your head slightly forward.
3. Inhale deeply through your nose or mouth.
4. Cough 2 times. The first cough will loosen your sputum and the second will move the sputum up to your throat. Spit your sputum into a white tissue.
5. Repeat 2 or 3 more times.



B. Huffing technique:

Huffing before you cough helps move sputum higher up in your airway so it's easier to cough up.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the ground.
2. Lean slightly forward.
3. Inhale deeply through your nose or mouth.
4. With your mouth open, exhale in short, forceful bursts while making a "ha, ha, ha" sound (like you're trying to mist a mirror). Repeat the whole thing 2 or 3 more times.
5. If you feel sputum in your throat, cough and spit it into a white tissue.

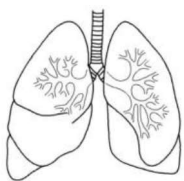


Helpful Hints:

- Coughing to get rid of extra sputum can be uncomfortable, but it's important to clear it out. Sputum that builds up can become infected.
- It's best to spit out your sputum into a tissue, but it's also OK to swallow it. It won't make you sick.
- After you have coughed sputum into a clean white tissue, it's important to look at it. If it has changed colour, follow your doctor's instructions.
- Wash your hands after throwing out your used tissues.

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COPD: Create a Breathing Chair

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What's a breathing chair?

A breathing chair is any place you like to sit when breathing is hard. You can have 2 or 3 chairs around your house, depending on where you're usually short of breath. Some people like to sit on the edge of their bed. Others like to have a chair near the bathroom for when they get short of breath doing bathroom activities. Most people with breathing problems have a chair in the living room, kitchen, or wherever they spend the most time during the day. Your breathing chair is your safe haven when you have trouble breathing.

What should I do in a breathing crisis?

Get to your breathing chair if it's close by. Sit down and don't talk. Lean forward in a resting position with your weight on your arms and breathe as fast as you need to through an open mouth. As your breathing slows, use pursed lip breathing when you exhale. Breathe out longer than you breathe in.



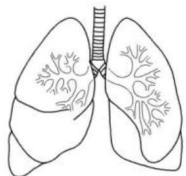
What items should I keep near my breathing chairs?

Rescue inhaler with chamber or spacer Your inhaler will help open your airways. Use 1 puff with the spacer when in a breathing crisis. Repeat as directed to maximum dose. 	Tabletop or standing fan with remote control Turn the fan on to blow air gently across your face. This makes it easier to breathe. 
Mist bottle filled with water Mist your face lightly with water and use a fan to blow air across your face. This makes you feel cool and helps you breathe easier right away. 	Extra medicine Some people have prescribed medicines which act quickly to help them breathe easier (such as morphine or lorazepam). Take these as directed by your doctor. 
TV with remote nearby (optional) TV is a distraction when you have trouble breathing. 	Telephone Use your phone to call for help if your breathing doesn't settle down. 

What about oxygen?

It's very helpful to have your oxygen concentrator or tank where you can reach it from your breathing chair. This lets you easily adjust the oxygen flow rate if your doctor or healthcare team has told you to do this.

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COPD: Energy Conservation

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What is energy conservation?

Energy conservation uses simple ways of saving your energy so you feel less short of breath. It means finding the easiest way to do things and having a good balance between rest and work.

How do you save energy?

1. By **pacing** your activities.
2. By **planning** your time.
3. By setting your **priorities**.
4. By learning to **relax**.
5. By using **good posture** at all times.
6. By becoming **efficient** (being organized and doing things the easiest way).

Pacing

Pacing is breaking up your activities into smaller parts and resting in between each part. If you get tired, no matter what you're doing, stop and rest. Pacing also includes slowing down. Don't push yourself when your heart or shortness of breath is telling you to rest. Moving slower when you walk or do activities will also use less energy.

Tips:

- Take stairs slowly and rest after every 2 to 3 steps.
- Sit down on your closed toilet seat to rest in between each of your morning bathroom activities (brushing teeth, shaving, drying your hair).
- Do pursed lip breathing* during activities to help reduce shortness of breath.
- Eat smaller meals throughout the day if eating a big meal makes you breathless.

Planning

Plan a schedule for the week or the month. By planning what you'll do ahead of time, you can give yourself plenty of time to do things so you don't feel rushed and breathless. Try not to schedule too many tasks in one day. Be ready to rest when needed, even in the middle of a task.

Tips:

- Plan your activities and tasks (such as doctor's appointments, grocery shopping, or doing chores around the house) for the time of day you have the most energy.
- Set realistic goals. Decide what tasks are important for you to do versus tasks that you would like to do but aren't necessary.

Good posture

Good posture is not only about standing tall. It means using your body correctly at all times. Good posture allows muscles to work more easily and use the least amount of energy.

Tips:

- Avoid holding your arms away from your body or using your arms above shoulder level (such as window washing, vacuuming, or washing your hair).
- Organize your cabinets and closets so that things you use the most are within easy reach.
- Sit down on a chair while preparing meals, washing dishes, and doing personal grooming. Use a bath seat for bathing or showering.

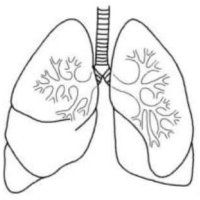
Efficient

Being efficient is about being organized and doing things the easiest way to make the best use of your energy.

- Don't do anything that doesn't have to be done:
 - Let dishes air dry instead of hand-drying them.
 - Choose clothing that doesn't need ironing.
 - Ask family members to do chores or hire people to do heavy chores (such as shovelling snow or mowing the lawn).
- Make enough food for 2 meals. Eat 1 meal and freeze the other for later.
- Avoid carrying and lifting:
 - Slide pots on counters.
 - Use a grocery cart.
 - Ask people to help you.
- Reduce unnecessary bending and stooping:
 - Use a boot/shoe grip to remove shoes and a long-handled shoehorn to put shoes on.
 - Use a reacher to grab small items off the floor.
- Let gravity do the work:
 - Throw laundry down a chute or down the stairs.
- Use the easiest way:
 - Don't lift and carry things when you can slide or roll them.
 - Use equipment that can help you be less short of breath (walker, raised toilet seat, bath seat or stair lift).
- Make bathing easier:
 - Wear your oxygen during bathing or showering.
 - Keep the bathroom door open so there's less humidity.
 - Use bathing aids such as a grab bar, hand-held shower, and bath seat.
 - Use a terry towel robe after bathing so you don't have to dry yourself with a towel.

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COPD: Flare-Ups and Body Position

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If you are very short of breath, feel anxious, confused or drowsy, or have chest pain, call 911 right away. The paramedics will decide if they will treat you at home or tell you if you need to go the hospital.

What is a flare-up?

When you're having a flare-up, you feel different than usual. This includes:

- changes in the colour, amount, or thickness of your sputum (also called mucus or phlegm).
- your symptoms get worse (such as cough, tight chest, shortness of breath, fatigue, fever, or feeling unwell).

How do I manage a flare-up?

If your symptoms are getting worse:

- Review your Action Plan if you have one.
- Use your reliever or rescue inhaler (blue puffer) more often.
- Use pursed lip breathing and body positions (see the next page).
- Slow down and pace yourself to save your energy.

If your symptoms keep getting worse over 48 hours:

- Follow your Action Plan (prednisone and antibiotics) if you have one and call your doctor.
- If you don't have an Action Plan, call your doctor. Tell the staff that you're having a breathing flare-up and you need to see or speak with the doctor right away.
- If you can't speak with your doctor, get someone to take you to Urgent Care or Emergency.

If your symptoms aren't getting better within 48 hours of starting prednisone or antibiotics, call your doctor or go to Emergency or call 911.

How can I avoid a flare-up?

- Stay smoke free.
- Keep your home smoke free.
- Take your medicines regularly.
- Avoid infections by handwashing or using hand sanitizer often.
- Stay active by walking or exercising every day.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Stay in touch with your healthcare team.
- Get your flu shot every year.
- Get at least 1 pneumonia shot.

What other handouts would be helpful to me?

- "How Can the Environment Affect My Breathing?"
- "Create a Breathing Chair"

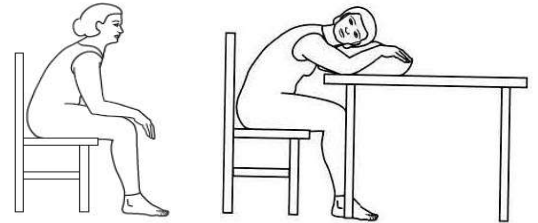
What positions are helpful when I'm having a flare-up?

You can try the following positions to help yourself feel better when you're having a flare-up. Remember these tips:

1. Keep your back as straight as possible.
2. Relax your shoulders and keep them down.
3. Do **pursed lip breathing** (breathe out 2 to 3 times longer than you breathe in).

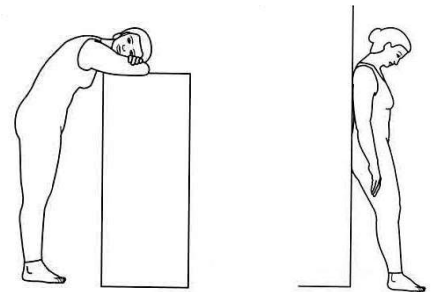
Sitting

- Place both feet on the ground with your legs apart.
- Lean your chest forward while keeping your back as straight as you can, and rest your elbows on your knees, OR
- Lean your chest forward while keeping your back as straight as you can, resting your arms on a table.



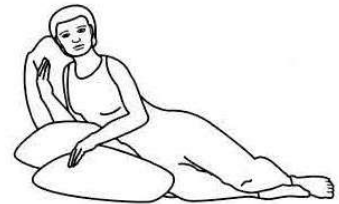
Standing

- Lean your chest forward while keeping your back as straight as you can.
- Rest your hands on a table or any other surface, OR
- Lean a shoulder against a wall while keeping your back straight, OR
- Lean your back against a wall while keeping your back straight, with your feet forward and away from the wall.



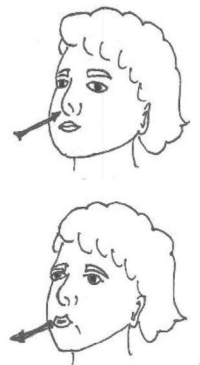
Lying Down

- Lie on your side, leaning on 3 or 4 pillows.
- Keep your head up and your shoulder supported.

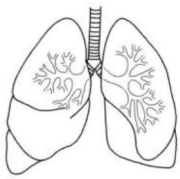


How do I do pursed lip breathing?

- Try to relax your neck and shoulder muscles.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose (or mouth) for 2 counts as if you're smelling roses.
- Purse or pucker your lips as though you're blowing out candles on a cake or trying to whistle.
- Breathe out slowly through pursed lips for a count of 4 (or twice as long as you breathed in).
- Repeat.
- Don't force your lungs to empty.
- Don't let your cheeks relax or balloon out.
- Remember that your breath in doesn't have to be a deep breath. A normal breath will do.



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COPD: How Can the Environment Affect My Breathing?

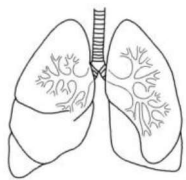
Does this information apply to me? Check with your health care provider before changing your treatment.

Things that might make my symptoms worse	What I can do to help myself
Indoor Pollutants	
Cigarette smoke (including second-hand smoke) and e-cigarettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make my home smoke free.
Household cleaning products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for products that are non-toxic and environmentally friendly. • Try not to use aerosols, sprays, and fine powders.
Strong odours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid smells that bother me, such as cooking fumes, perfumes, fabric softeners, dryer sheets, aerosol sprays, candles, essential oils, vaporizers, and air fresheners.
Dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask someone else to vacuum. • Wash mattress covers and pillows. • Change the furnace filter or other air filters regularly.
Outdoor Pollutants	
Exhaust fumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay away from areas with lots of traffic. • Use air conditioning in my car. • Close windows and doors at home if I need to.
Gas fumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the gas attendant fill my car with gas.
Smog and forest fire smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay indoors, close windows, and check the Air Quality Health Index (go to this website: weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/index_e.html).
Changes in Weather	
Extreme heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay indoors, and close windows and doors. • Close blinds and curtains to keep heat out. • Use air conditioning or fans.
Extreme cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay indoors. • Wear a loose-knit scarf over my face if I have to go out.
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay indoors. • Cover my face with a loose-knit scarf.

Humidity and barometric pressure (air pressure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay indoors. • Keep activity at a low or moderate level.
Respiratory Infections	
Cold and flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep my hands clean and away from my face. • Cover my mouth when I cough. • Get my vaccinations (flu and pneumonia).
Sinus infections (sinusitis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See my doctor and treat infections early to avoid lung trouble.
Emotions	
Anger, anxiety, and stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break the cycle (see the handout “Understanding Anxiety and How to Break the Cycle”). • Learn ways to manage stress.

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COPD: Managing Nasal Congestion due to Oxygen Therapy

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Oxygen therapy helps people with chronic lung disease get enough oxygen for their body's needs. Oxygen is usually given through nasal prongs (thin, flexible tubes put in the nostrils). The constant flow of oxygen can cause the blood vessels inside your nose and sinuses to get irritated and congested (stuffed up). You might have a runny nose, or have a dry nose and throat, or feel like you can't breathe through your nose at all. Some people have a lot of nose bleeds. Here are some tips and tricks to help you manage.

Put more moisture in the air you breathe:

- Install a humidifier on your furnace.
- Place a portable humidifier next to your bed or wherever you spend most of your time. You will need to clean the humidifier often so mold and bacteria don't grow.
- Take a steamy shower or bath.

Keep the inside of your nose moist:

- Keep hydrated. Drinking enough fluids helps keep your nasal passages moist.
- Use medical-grade sesame oil nasal spray which works well for nasal dryness, crusting, and irritation. Check with your doctor first.
- Try a saline nasal mist or spray to help clear out dust, dirt, and pollen. Ask your pharmacist for help choosing the right product.
- Flush out your nose once a day using a nasal saline rinse. This can add moisture and remove debris and thick mucus. Some examples of devices you can use include a squeeze bottle, neti pot, bulb syringe, or a battery-operated pulsed water device. Always read and follow the instructions carefully. Be sure to use distilled or boiled water when mixing the saline solution.
- Use a water-based saline nasal lubricant (ask a pharmacist for one). It's like saline nasal spray but in gel form. Don't use petroleum-based products such as petroleum jelly, mentholated cold rub or antibiotic ointment.

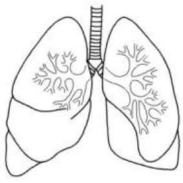
Ask about prescription medicines:

- Talk to your doctor about corticosteroid nasal spray. They might prescribe one to you when your nasal congestion won't go away and nothing else is working. This medicine works best if you use it every day. It may take about 2 weeks for your symptoms to improve.

Give your nose a break for an hour or two during the day:

- Place your nasal prongs in your mouth.
- Ask your oxygen provider if a mask is right for you. If it is, try wearing the oxygen mask when you're watching TV or reading instead of nasal prongs.

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COPD: Oxygen Therapy

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What is oxygen?

Oxygen is a gas that makes up 21% of the air you breathe. When you breathe in, oxygen moves from your lungs into your bloodstream. It then goes to any cells that need it. If you have a lung condition, you may have low oxygen levels in your blood.

When is oxygen therapy used?

Some people who have lung problems might need oxygen therapy. Oxygen is a medicine that your doctor orders when the level of oxygen in your blood is low. When you use oxygen the right way, it can help you feel less tired and short of breath. It may also help you live longer.

If you need oxygen, a home oxygen company will help you choose the right oxygen delivery system for you. The oxygen company will bring the equipment to your home and teach you how to use it.

How do I use my oxygen safely?

- **Never** smoke while you're wearing oxygen.
- Tell others not to smoke near you.
- Put no-smoking signs on the entry doors of your home.
- Stay 1.5 metres (5 feet) away from open flames like candles, gas stoves, fireplaces, or other heat sources.
- Avoid using any petroleum-based products such as petroleum jelly, mentholated cold rub or antibiotic ointment in and around your nose.
- Store your oxygen in a clean, secure area. Your oxygen company will show you how.
- Don't change the flow rate of your oxygen unless you've talked to your healthcare provider first.
- Secure your oxygen tank or portable concentrator in your car. Keep the window open a bit when you're driving.

What can I do if my nose is very dry (nasal dryness)?

- Use a nasal saline spray or rinse daily.
- Try a water-based nasal lubricant (ask your pharmacist) every day.
- Ask your oxygen company about having a humidifier put on your oxygen system.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about other options.

What can I do about skin irritation?

- Oxygen tubing might cause skin irritation (dry, red, or sore areas) around your ears or under your nose. If this happens, try wrapping gauze or a foam tubing wrap around the oxygen tubing to lift it off the irritated area. You can get foam wraps from your oxygen company.
- Ask your pharmacist for help if you get an open sore.
- Ask your oxygen company for more ideas.

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COPD: Physical Activity and Lung Disease

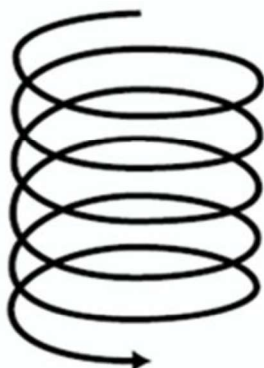
Does this information apply to me? Check with your health care provider before changing your treatment.

Physical activity and movement are important for your health and well-being. Stronger muscles use less oxygen, and you'll be less short of breath when you're active regularly. It's important to be as active as you can.

Shortness of breath can cause you to be anxious and afraid of being active. This can lead to weak muscles and more shortness of breath. It becomes a downward cycle.

Shortness of breath leads to

↓
Less activity to avoid breathlessness
↓
Muscles become weaker
More oxygen needed to do the work
↓
More shortness of breath
↓
Even less activity



Being
more
active
breaks
this cycle

Why is physical activity good for me?

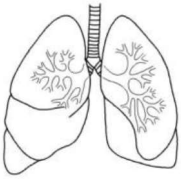
Regular activity helps to:

- Make your breathing easier.
- Make you feel stronger with more energy.
- Keep you out of the hospital.
- Do more on your own and stay independent.
- Sleep better and feel less tired.
- Improve your mood.
- Reduce constipation (trouble having bowel movements).

How do I get more active?

- Speak to your doctor first.
- Set short-term goals.
- Plan to be more active during the time of day when you have the most energy.
- Wear a good pair of shoes.
- Pace yourself.
- Breathe properly with the activity – remember to use pursed lip breathing (see the handout “Pursed Lip Breathing”).
- Take your blue/rescue puffer 5 minutes before you start (if your doctor has prescribed this for you).
- Monitor your shortness of breath and how tired you feel.
- Go a little further or do a little more every few days.
- If you get sick, stop your physical activities until you're better. Then start again by doing about half of what you were doing before you got sick. Slowly do a little more over the next 2 to 3 weeks.

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COPD: Pursed Lip Breathing

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What is pursed lip breathing?

Pursed lip breathing is a simple and useful way to control shortness of breath. By breathing out through pursed (puckered) lips, you can breathe out more air so there's less air trapped in your lungs.

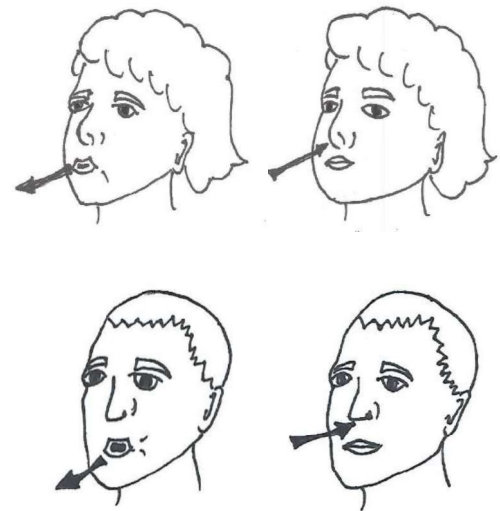
How does pursed lip breathing help me?

When you do pursed lip breathing:

- Oxygen levels in your blood are higher.
- Your breathing rate slows down.
- It helps you relax and feel less anxious.
- Breathing takes less work.
- Your airways stay open longer, letting old, “trapped” air escape and letting new, fresh air enter your lungs.
- You're able to be more active.
- You'll feel like you have better control over your breathing.

How do I do pursed lip breathing?

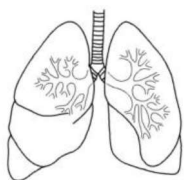
- If in doubt, breathe out! This helps you remember how to start.
- Purse or pucker your lips as though you're blowing out candles on a cake or trying to whistle.
- Breathe out comfortably through pursed lips for a count of 4 (or twice as long as you breathed in).
- Breathe in comfortably through your nose (or mouth) for 2 counts as if you're smelling roses.
- Repeat.
- Allow your neck and shoulder muscles to relax.
- Don't force your lungs to empty.
- Don't let your cheeks relax or balloon out.
- Remember that your breath in doesn't have to be a deep breath. A normal breath will do.



What should I remember when I'm doing pursed lip breathing?

- If in doubt, breathe out!
- Your breath out should be relaxed, not forced, and longer than the breath in.
- Breathe in and out comfortably and easily until you're in complete control.
- Practice pursed lip breathing when you're resting and use it when you're active.

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COPD: Questions to Ask Myself When I'm Anxious or Short of Breath

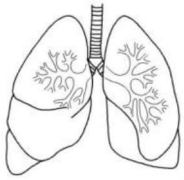
Does this information apply to me? Check with your health care provider before changing your treatment.

- **Do I have a lung infection or flare-up? Has the amount or colour of my sputum (also called mucus or phlegm) changed? Am I coughing more?**
 - Use your rescue inhaler (blue puffer) up to the highest number of puffs prescribed.
 - Follow your Action Plan for a flare-up (if you have one).
 - Work at clearing sputum from your lungs by coughing or huffing (see the handout "Cough and Clear").
- **Are my ankles or legs more swollen than usual? Have I gained weight suddenly?**
 - Make an appointment with your family doctor or call Health Link at 811.
 - Don't eat high-salt foods such as fast food, takeout, cured meat, pickles, and chips.
- **Am I using the oxygen flow rate my healthcare providers prescribed? Do I know my flow rates for rest, sleep, and activity?**
 - Oxygen is a medication! Always follow your healthcare provider's directions for using it.
 - Remember that too much or too little oxygen can make your breathing worse.
 - Check your tubing to make sure it's connected and your oxygen is turned on.
- **Am I taking my inhalers and respiratory medicines as prescribed?**
 - Check if your inhalers are empty or expired.
 - Ask your pharmacist or healthcare team to make sure you're using your inhaler correctly.
- **Has something happened in my life to make me feel more anxious or stressed?**
 - Try your relaxation positions, breathing techniques (see the handout "Understanding Anxiety and How to Break the Cycle").
 - Listen to music.
 - Talk to your healthcare team about your anxiety.
- **Am I sleeping well?**
 - Try using resting positions (see the handout "Flare-Ups and Body Positions").
 - Limit screen time before bed (such as watching TV or using tablets, smart phones, or computers).
 - Limit caffeine after 4:00 p.m.
 - Limit fluids (such as water, juice, pop or alcohol) in the evening.
 - Try not to eat heavy or spicy meals. Don't eat 3 to 4 hours before bed.
- **Has the weather changed? Have I been around tobacco smoke or other triggers? (See the handout "How Can the Environment Affect My Breathing?".)**
 - Stay home if you can.
 - Use your rescue inhaler (blue puffer) before you leave home.
 - Don't smoke and stay away from second-hand smoke.

- **Have I eaten anything different? Have I eaten too much or at different times than usual?**
 - Try not to eat gassy foods such as onions, cabbage, broccoli, and beans.
 - Try not to drink fizzy (carbonated) drinks.
 - Soft and moist foods are easier to swallow when you are short of breath (such as casseroles, curries, sauces, ice cream).
 - Eat smaller meals more often.
 - Chew really well and rest between bites of food.
 - Don't drink through a straw (this can give you more gas).
- **Did I exercise too much in the last few days?**
 - Try not to walk and talk at the same time.
 - Divide up your activities with lots of rests.

Notes:

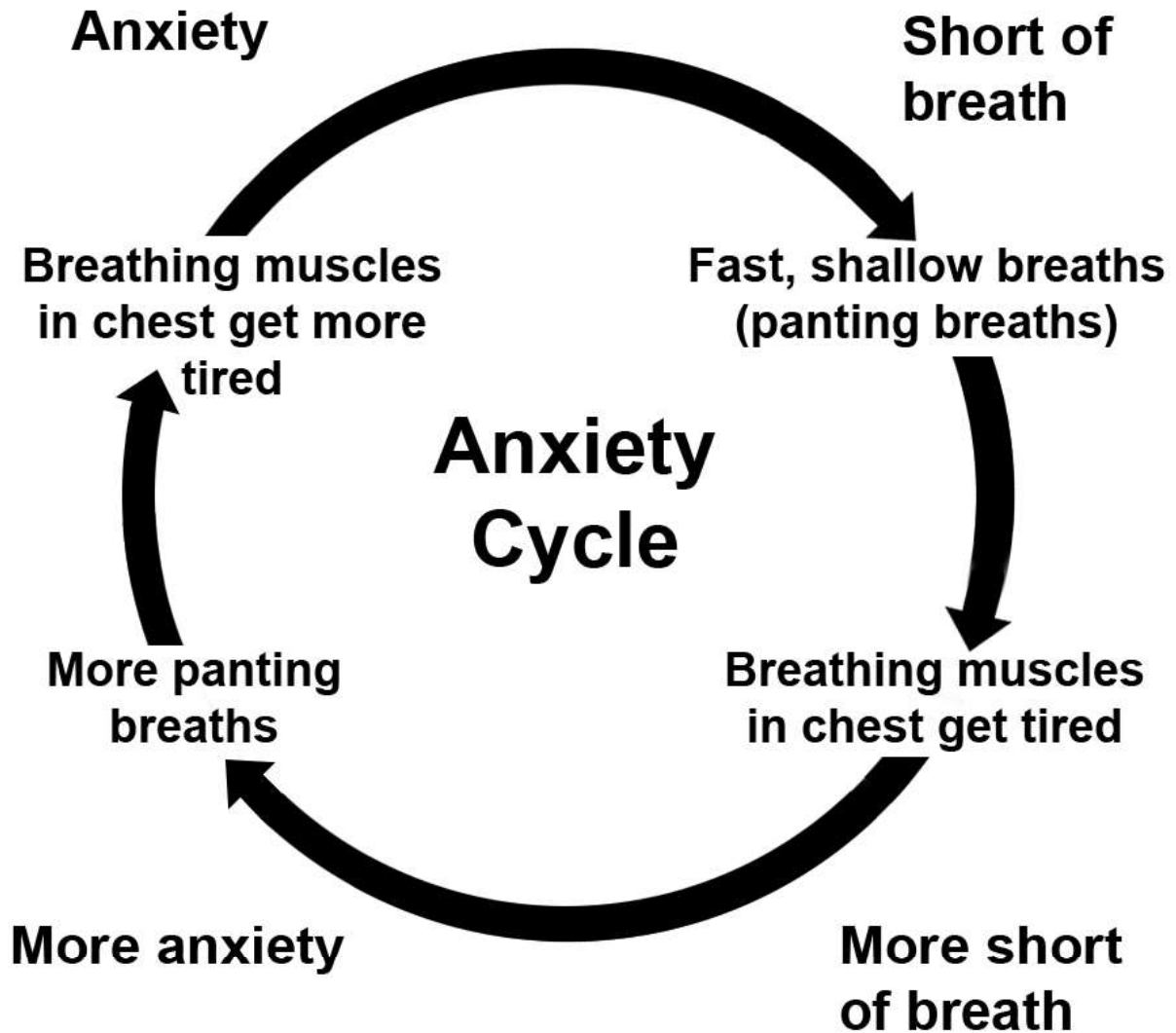
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COPD:

Understanding Anxiety & How to Break the Cycle

Does this information apply to me? Check with your health care provider before changing your treatment.



What can you do to break this cycle?

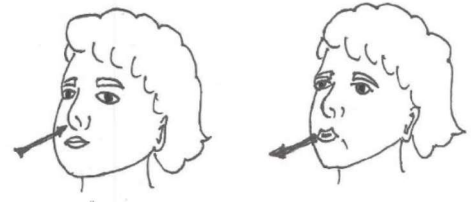
The order doesn't matter – just do it!

1. Stop and rest.
2. Use your rescue/reliever inhaler (blue puffer).
3. Do pursed lip breathing. Remember to breathe out 2 to 3 times longer than you breathe in.
4. Try body positions that can help (see the next page).

Body Positions

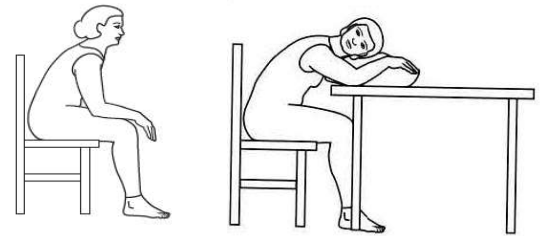
Remember:

1. Keep your back as straight as possible.
2. Relax your shoulders and keep them down.
3. Do **pursed lip breathing** (breathe out 2 to 3 times longer than you breathe in).



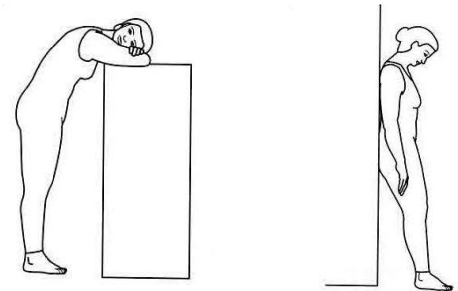
Sitting

- Place both feet on the ground with your legs apart.
- Lean your chest forward while keeping your back as straight as you can, and rest your elbows on your knees, OR
- Lean your chest forward while keeping your back as straight as you can, resting your arms on a table.



Standing

- Lean your chest forward while keeping your back as straight as you can.
- Rest your hands on a table or any other surface, OR
- Lean a shoulder against a wall while keeping your back straight, OR
- Lean your back against a wall while keeping your back straight, with your feet forward and away from the wall.



Lying Down

- Lie on your side, leaning on 3 or 4 pillows.
- Keep your head up and your shoulder supported



Air Trapping

What does it feel like?

- You feel so full of air that you can't take another breath in.
- Your shoulders feel like they're touching your ears.

What can you do to help yourself? (The order doesn't matter – just do it!)

- Stop and rest.
- Take your rescue/reliever inhaler (blue puffer).
- **Do pursed lip breathing** (breathe out 2 to 3 times longer than you breathe in).

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