Pursed Lip Breathing

Home exercise program

What does pursed lip breathing do?
Pursed lip breathing helps to:

• Improve breathing overall
• Release trapped air from your lungs
• Keep your airways open longer
• Prolong your exhalation to slow your breathing rate
• Improve your breathing patterns by moving old air out of your lungs and allowing new air to enter your lungs
• Relieve shortness of breath
• Cause general relaxation

When should I use this technique?
Use pursed lip breathing:

• During the difficult part of any activity, such as bending, lifting, or climbing stairs
• When you feel you are “behind” on your breathing, or when breathlessness causes you to feel panic or anxiety
Questions?
Call 206-598-4830

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Occupational Therapy: 206-598-4830

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Pursed Lip Breathing Technique

Practice this technique 4 to 5 times a day at first so you can get the correct breathing pattern:

- Relax your neck and shoulder muscles.
- Breathe in (inhale) slowly through your nose and count to 2, keeping your mouth closed. Do not take a deep breath; a normal breath will do. It may help to count to yourself: “Inhale, 1, 2.”
- Pucker or “purse” your lips, like you are going to whistle or make the flame of a candle flicker slightly.
- Breathe out (exhale) slowly and gently through your pursed lips while counting to 4. It may help to count to yourself: “Exhale, 1, 2, 3, 4.”

Inhaling during pursed lip breathing
Exhaling during pursed lip breathing