

Pursed Lip Breathing

Home exercise program

Pursed lip breathing is one of the most effective ways to control shortness of breath. It is a simple way to slow the pace of your breathing, which makes each breath more efficient.

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

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.”

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



Scan with your phone camera for a digital copy of this handout.



Inhale through your nose, “1, 2”.



Exhale through your mouth, “1, 2, 3, 4”.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

My provider:
