

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:
