Breathing Exercises Can Relieve COPD Symptoms

Breathing exercises for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) help a person strengthen breathing muscles, get more oxygen and breathe with less effort. Below are some examples of breathing exercises specifically for persons with COPD:

Pursed-lip Breathing During Activities and Exercise

Pursed-lip breathing is a good technique to use during exercise or activities that might be a bit difficult—like bending, lifting or climbing stairs. This technique will help relieve shortness of breath through relaxation.

1. Sit upright and relax the neck and shoulder muscles.

2. Breathe in normally for two seconds through the nose, keeping the mouth closed.

3. Breathe out for four seconds through pursed lips as if you were going to whistle. If this is too long, simply breathe out twice as long as you breathe in.

4. Repeat steps 1–3 for a minute or two or as long as you feel comfortable.

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Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing helps strengthen the diaphragm and the abdominal muscles, allowing more air to move in and out of your lungs without tiring your chest muscles.

1. Lie on your back on a flat surface with knees bent. Put pillows under your knees and head for support.

2. Place one hand on your belly below the rib cage. Place the other hand on your chest. This allows you to feel your diaphragm as you breathe.

3. Inhale deeply through the nose for a count of 3. (The belly and lower ribs should rise, but the chest should remain still.)

4. Tighten the stomach muscles and exhale for a count of 6 through slightly puckered lips. Your hand on your chest should remain still.

5. Repeat for 5–10 minutes.

Live Free Home Health Care understands the needs of those with COPD, and can assist with breathing exercises and symptom management at home. Call **Live Free Home Health Care** today to learn more about the ways in-home care can help people with COPD breathe easier.

Sources: WebMD, Cleveland Clinic, Spiriva.com,
American Health Assistance Foundation,
FactsForHealth.org, NIHSeniorHealth,
Alzheimer's Reading Room