

Better Breathing

A publication of
Breathe California
of the Bay Area

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Little Steps to Better Breathing

Sources: American Association for Respiratory Care, Ibreathe.com

Enjoy the fresh air, take a stroll, go for a swim. No matter how mild or severe your COPD is, exercise is still possible in some shape or form. Even the slightest bit of exercise can significantly improve your quality of life. Simple tasks, like walking around the house or picking up books, can improve your strength. In time, you may be up for trying more exerting activities like walking outdoors or swimming. In most cases, walking is the best exercise for people with COPD. If you are up for it, you should try walking 3 or 4 times daily for 5 to 15 minutes at a time.

When you begin your exercise regimen, start by setting a goal you know you can achieve. As you start making progress, gradually set your goals higher. Try out different exercises such as swimming,

walking, upper-body weight training and low-impact aerobics, and find the one that best fits you. If you find yourself enjoying multiple activities, alternate your routine to keep exercising fresh. Also, invite a friend to exercise with you - not only will you be able to motivate each other, but you will also keep each other company.

Before starting your daily exercise routine, you should always 'warm up' your lungs. Exercises like pursed-lip breathing can improve your lung function before you start exercising. Inhale through your nose so your stomach muscles move outward and your diaphragm pulls air into your lungs. Then exhale through your mouth with your lips pursed, making a hissing noise. Last, exhale twice as long as you inhale. Do this before and during exercises to relieve

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The BBC Is Back in Action!

Welcome back Better Breathers! We hope you enjoyed the two-month summer break and are ready for the great autumn ahead! We've got a wide array of engaging speakers lined up to help you learn how to live healthier and breathe easier. Meetings will continue to be held once a month in San Jose and Palo Alto, and we also offer quarterly meetings in Gilroy. The meetings are always free and new members are always welcome! Check out the back page for upcoming meeting dates and speakers!



Prepare to Walk!

On Saturday, October 6th, our 6th annual Breath of Life Walk returns to West Valley College in Saratoga! More than 400 walkers will come together in teams for the leisurely 5k walk and enjoy the family atmosphere, food, prizes, and more.

This is the ideal time for you to join the community to support those affected by lung disease and help to rid lung disease from our community. One hundred percent of the proceeds will stay here locally to help fund Breathe California lung health programs, like the Better Breathers Club.

Anybody can do it and your efforts can help support lung disease patients like yourself! Or, if you can't make it, you can still make a difference by sponsoring a walker.

To learn more, visit www.breathoflifewalk.org and click on the icon for the Saratoga Walk. There you can register for the walk, set up a team or personal webpage, sponsor a walker, and much more. You can also register by phone (408) 998-5865, mail, or in person.

Hope to see you there!!

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shortness of breath and improve ventilation.

You should always stretch before beginning your exercise activity. If you have chosen walking as your exercise, you can warm up by starting out at a slow pace for five or ten minutes. At the end of your exercise, you should 'cool-down' by

stretching and/or doing your exercises at a slower pace, which will bring your heart rate back to normal.

Whatever you do, don't let COPD hold you back and don't underestimate the benefits of even the smallest bit of exercise! Have fun and work at your own pace, you're not in competition with anyone but yourself!

Singing Away the COPD Blues

Sources: SixWise.com, Natural Health, Chorus America

Take hold of that desire to sing along the next time your favorite song grabs you—in the shower, in the car, or maybe during Labor Day festivities—because the notes you sing are worth more than just a good time. Singing offers unique benefits of enhancing your well-being, reducing your feelings of pain, and even prolonging your life. For COPD sufferers the song is even sweeter, as several studies have found that singing on a regular basis leads to improved lung capacity, high energy, relieved asthma, better posture, and enhanced feelings of relaxation, mood and confidence.

Dedicating at least an hour a day to some form of singing can lead to notable physical effects and deeper, more regulated, breathing. Can't carry a tune? Other vocal techniques, such as chanting or toning, may also be effective. There are three main ways to sound off:

Chanting: The rhythmic speaking or singing of words or sounds, often primarily on one or two pitches called reciting tones, can be done alone or in call-and-response form.

Singing: You must sing a certain way to receive optimal health benefits, so start by practicing breathing from the lowest point in the abdomen, which will lead to singing that's properly supported by the lower body, not the throat. After relaxing the jaw, back of the neck, and shoulders, practice inhaling through an imaginary straw and exhaling while making ssss sounds.

Toning: Vocal music therapy isn't limited to songs with lyrics. Toning uses sustained notes instead of words. More freeform than chanting, toning is usually based on vowel-like sounds, such as eeee, ooh, and aaah. "Toning is sonic massage," says music therapist Preston-Roberts. "The body is massaging itself through the vibrations of the tonal music."

To learn more, check out http://chorusamerica.org/vox_article_singinghealth.cfm

In the News

Each month, we are proud to bring you some of the latest news affecting lung disease patients. You can also find more news briefs and articles online by visiting:

www.lungsrus.org

Click on the News link from the menu bar to reach our newsroom. From there, you can view individual articles by clicking on the "News Briefs" link.

From the Newsroom, you can also read about the agency's latest work in the community. Click on the "Agency News" link to view our latest articles and press releases.

The following news briefs have been summarized from external sources and have been placed here solely to inform you of the latest in lung health news. Breathe California does not endorse their findings nor have they verified their accuracy.

Gender Differences Seen with COPD

WebMD Medical News, August 1, 2007

In the August issue of American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, University of Michigan researchers reported that women with advanced COPD experience greater shortness of breath and a poorer quality of life than men with the same condition. Ironically, the women in the study had also smoked for fewer years than the men before developing COPD.

In recent years, women have increasingly been diagnosed with COPD and more women in the U.S. now die of the disease than men. To better understand sex difference in COPD, professor of internal medicine Fernando J. Martinez, MD and his colleagues examined the cases of 1,053 patients with severe emphysema enrolled in a multicenter

study of surgical treatment. Around 40 percent of the patients were women. COPD severity among the men and women in the study was similar, but the two sexes had significantly different disease presentations.

The examination of lung tissue showed that women had more airway problems indicative of chronic bronchitis, which, according to Martinez, may explain why women experienced more breathlessness and decreased ability to exercise compared to men. Although this is still a controversial idea, these new findings highlight the importance of considering gender in future studies of COPD and could have major implications for new treatment options.

Artificial Lung in the Works

University of Michigan, August 14, 2007

According to recent reports, researchers at the University of Michigan Medical School laboratory are making significant progress in the development of an implantable artificial lung that can serve as a bridge to lung transplantation. The lung uses tiny hollow fibers and the heart's own pumping power to oxygenate blood and can replace 100 percent of lung function. This device is designed to help prolong patients' lives as they wait for a lung transplant.

Recent studies show the need for an artificial lung is increasing. More than 13 million Americans have a chronic respiratory disease in which the only effective treatment is a lung transplant. A \$5 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health will fund animal studies that will move the prototype through final details of readiness for patients. This paves the way for a small clinical trial for the artificial lung, which researchers expect to launch in about three years.

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is a publication of:

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*As the local lung
health leader, Breathe
California of the Bay
Area fights lung disease
in all its forms and works
with its communities to
promote lung health.*

Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

Monday, September 10, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Palo Alto
Avenidas Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street
Speaker: TBA
Dietary Programs for those with Lung Disease

Monday, September 24, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – San Jose
Breathe California Offices, 1469 Park Avenue
Speaker: TBA
Dietary Programs for those with Lung Disease

A Look Ahead: Our October BBC Meetings

Palo Alto – Monday, October 8th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
Gilroy – Thursday, October 4th, 11 am to 12 noon
San Jose – Monday, October 29th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

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