

Pursed-Lip Breathing

A simple breathing technique to slow your breath, take in more air, and ease shortness of breath — during activity or when a breathless spell hits.

WHY IT HELPS

Pursed-lip breathing slows your breathing and lets you take a deeper breath. Practice it when you feel fine so the steps are automatic when you are breathless and don't have to stop and remember how.

1

Breathe in through your nose

Inhale gently through your nose and count *“One... two...”*

2

Breathe out through pursed lips

Exhale slowly through your mouth with your lips puckered (pursed), as if you were blowing bubbles. Count *“One... two... three... four”* — about twice as long as the inhale.

3

Repeat

Repeat Steps 1 and 2. After four or five cycles, your breathing should be slower and feel easier. Slow in and slow out is the key.

PRACTICE TIP

Rehearse this technique when you are calm. Then it will be ready when breathlessness shows up.

REMEMBER

Breathe out about twice as long as you breathe in. Don't force or hold your breath.

WHEN TO USE IT

- When you feel short of breath (at rest or with activity)
- During exercise — including stairs
- At the start of a huff-cough or other breathing exercises
- Anytime you need to slow a rapid breathing pattern