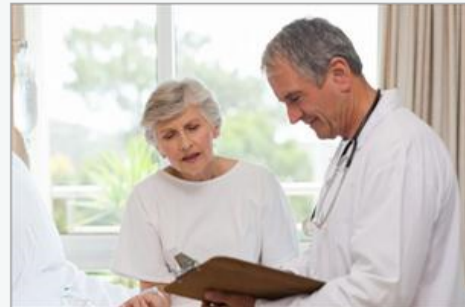


Breathing Exercises to Improve Lung Capacity

Most of us don't realize that we use less than 25% of the actual capacity of the *lungs* as we breathe. In case of shallow breathing, only the top section of the lungs gets filled with air. The number of blood vessels in the upper lobes is lesser in comparison to the lower lobes. This can have an adverse effect on the oxygen levels, which in turn would adversely affect one's health. Thus, it is essential to follow the right breathing techniques. Following abdominal/diaphragmatic breathing is one of the best ways to improve one's lung capacity.



The diaphragm is a large muscle that is located between the chest and the abdomen. When the diaphragm contracts, the abdomen expands, which causes air to be moved into the lungs. This form of breathing helps improve the flow of blood and lymph. Also, this form of breathing helps one stay relaxed. We should make a conscious effort to replace short, rapid breathing by diaphragmatic breathing. This will certainly prove beneficial for one's overall health.

Exercises for Increasing Lung Capacity

Forward Bend.

First of All, Stand Upright on Flat Ground.

Bend over the waist, keeping both knees loose and exhaling as much as you can.

Fill in the maximum possible amount of air in your lungs, and hold it for a count of 20 seconds.

- During counting, extend your arms overhead completely.
- Finally, relax and exhale and lower your arms gradually.
- Do this exercise for at least 4 times.

Oriental Breath

For this exercise, you need to inhale in three short bursts first through the nose. Do not exhale.

While you inhale for the first time, raise your arms at shoulder level in front of you.

When you inhale for the third time, your arms should be overhead.

- Thereafter, get back your arms in their original position in a circular motion while you exhale.
- Perform this exercise for 5-10 times.

Rib Stretch

Breathe in gradually and expand your lungs to the fullest.

Hold Your Breath for Around 20 Seconds.

While counting till 20, keep your hands on your hips with your thumbs in the front and little finger on the small of your back.

Abdominal Breathing

Lie on Your Back in a Comfortable Posture.

Put one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen.

The hand on your belly should rise higher than the hand on your chest.

Now, Exhale Only Through Your Mouth.

Breathe in from your nose and hold your breath for around 7 seconds.

Breathe Out Till You Finish Counting Up to 8.

Thereafter, squeeze your abdominal muscles to make sure there is no residual air.

Numbered Breaths

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Breathe out the last bit of air in your lungs.

- Inhale once again.
- As you inhale, imagine the number 1, and concentrate on inhalation at the same time.
- Breathe out, after holding your breath for 2 seconds.
- Imagine the number 2 as you exhale.
- Similarly, inhale while visualizing the number 3.
- Hold the breath for 3 seconds.
- Continue till the count of 8.

Deep Breathing

- This exercise can be performed while lying down or sitting in an upright position.
- Inhale as much as you can, and exhale gradually.

Perform this Exercise as Many Times as You can.

Besides the aforementioned exercises, you can also perform yoga for enhancing your lung capacity and improving your physical and mental health.

Always consult a physician before starting any physical fitness program in order to reduce the risk of injury.

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