



Respiratory Support Guide

Please note that this guide is not meant to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. These tips have been compiled based on general information released by doctors and respiratory therapists. If you are having difficulty breathing, seek immediate medical help. This information should not be used as a substitute for medical advice.

Breath Stacking

When practicing breath stacking, make sure to use “diaphragm breathing”. This will help to use the full length of your lungs. You can focus on this breathing by placing one hand just above your belly button and the other on the side of your lower ribs. When you breathe in, focus on the breath going to these two hands – the belly and the lower ribs should expand, while your shoulders and chest should remain relatively stable, but may move a bit as you get to your ‘fuller’ breaths.

1. Inhale briefly. Pause. Inhale a little more. Pause. Inhale to the fullest. Pause for a count of 5, then slowly exhale through your mouth. You may cough at the end of your exhale to assist in clearing out the lungs.
2. Generally recommended to practice in the morning and evening. Start with one or two reps if there is any discomfort and work your way up to five reps.
3. Check out this [video](#) for a demonstration and more info.

What this does:

- Opens the alveoli in the lower lobes of the lungs
- Stretches and strengthens lungs and muscles involved in breathing

Stomach Breathing

For this exercise, you will be laying on your stomach. Place a pillow under your hips if it is uncomfortable to lay on your stomach without it.

Take deep breaths (slightly deeper than normal) and continue this exercise for approximately 10 minutes.

What this does:

- Allows more oxygen to get to your lungs (when you lay on your back, your body is putting weight on your lungs).
- May help boost your blood oxygen levels.
- May decrease likelihood of pneumonia.

Additional Positions to try:

Any of the following positions will assist relaxation of the upper chest while encouraging use of the lower chest. Breathe at the rate at which you feel comfortable, as quickly as necessary but gently. As control is gained you will be able to slow down the rate of your breathing. Try adopting one of these positions between exercises, to recover. Try to make sure your hands are loose and relaxed.



sitting leaning
forward



sitting with pillows



standing leaning back



standing leaning
forward

Image from naimad.co.uk

Essential Oils to Open the Airway

Mix 2 tsp coconut oil with 3 drops peppermint oil and/or frankincense oil and test on a small section of skin. If you do not have any reaction, apply to chest and neck.

- Peppermint reduces inflammation, loosens mucus, and eases bronchial tension
- Frankincense reduces symptoms of asthma including shortness of breath and wheezing

Practice Breathing for Longevity

Although breathing is specifically top-of-mind right now due to COVID-19, practicing deep breathing has many benefits to overall health, thanks to its relationship with glutathione. Deep breathing practices are associated with an [increase in glutathione levels](#). Glutathione is an important antioxidant in the body, and is correlated with improved longevity. According to Nutrition Genome “research shows that people who live the longest have the best-preserved antioxidant system and highest glutathione levels.”

So take a DEEP breath. Then do it again. And again.