Physical Therapy and COPD

Will breathing exercises improve my condition?

Exercises will not cure your disease, but they can help you breathe more efficiently. So if you do breathing exercises regularly, then you will make better use of the lung power that you have. Also, these exercises will help you get your breath back more quickly after becoming winded.

What if I’m too short of breath to exercise?

By training the muscles you use for breathing, you may be able to improve your tolerance to exercise. Regular, moderate exercise, such as walking, helps keep your muscles toned. This is important in maintaining your strength and endurance. You can proceed in your exercise program at your own pace.

How can I train myself to breathe more efficiently?

Start by laying on your back with your head on a pillow and follow these steps!

⇒ Inhale through your nose and allow the abdomen to expand like a balloon filling up with air. (You may want to place your hand on your abdomen and feel the muscles move out).
⇒ Exhale through your mouth and pull the abdomen in toward the spine. (You may place your hands on your abdomen and feel the muscles contract in.) As you do this, purse your lips so that you hear a hissing sound. Exhaling this way should take at least twice as long as inhaling normally.
⇒ Use this method until you are comfortable and then try in a sitting position. You can then try while walking (inhaling on step 1 and exhaling on steps 2 & 3). Finally you can transition to doing it while going up stairs (inhale on step 1 and exhale on steps 2, 3, and 4).

Practice this method for about 10 minutes each day and use it whenever you feel out of breath during your day. You may feel some abdominal or chest discomfort secondary to muscles that you haven’t used in awhile. This will resolve as you do the exercises on a daily basis.

If you have any questions or concerns, consult with your physician and ask for a Physical Therapy order for further treatment!

ProCare Rehabilitation Services
Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy
2519 E. 10th St.
Anderson, IN 46012
Phone: (765) 298-3500