

# BUTEYKO BREATHING



## DID YOU KNOW?

Every cell in our body needs a certain concentration of carbon dioxide emissions – around 6.5% – in order to maintain healthy function. If we breathe in an air volume that is too large for the body's needs, we breathe out carbon dioxide too soon, and the lungs are not capable of maintaining the correct levels.

## SUMMARY

We've been taught that deep breathing is optimal because it allows the most oxygen into the lungs. **Strange as it may seem, oxygen deficiency is not caused by lack of oxygen, but by lack of carbon dioxide.** If we breathe too much, we actually get less oxygen. Let's see why...

Normal breathing frequency at rest is about 8-12 breaths per minute. Many of us breathe much more, often up to 25 breaths per minute. This breathing habit mostly goes unnoticed, but nevertheless causes a low grade form of hyperventilation, upsetting the oxygen and CO<sup>2</sup> balance. For the body to actually use oxygen, it also needs a certain amount of carbon dioxide.

The **Buteyko Breathing Method**, developed in the 1950's by Russian medical scientist Dr. Konstantin Buteyko, teaches you how to bring your breathing volume back toward normal or, in other words, reverse what's called chronic hyperventilation or chronic over-breathing. When your breathing is normal, you have better oxygenation of tissues and organs, including your brain.


## HOW TO DO IT



The Buteyko Breathing Technique teaches you how to breathe properly through the nose (*not the mouth*) and with the diaphragm to improve nitric oxide and carbon dioxide levels in the body. When done properly, Buteyko breathing encourages the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, resulting in a reduction of blood pressure, a reduction of stress and the strengthening of the immune system. Here are the simple steps to perform this technique.

## WHY IT WORKS

Studies have shown that breathing lightly and only through the nose is the ideal technique for relaxation and optimal health. One such study on the effect of Buteyko breathing technique on patients with bronchial asthma showed a significant decrease in asthma related symptoms and a significant improvement in peak expiratory flow rate (PEFR)<sup>1</sup>.

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| 1.   |  | 2.   |  | 3.   |  | 4.   |  | 5.  |  |
| <p><b>Normal Breath In Through Nose</b></p> <p>Sit down in an upright posture and take a normal, calm breath through your nose. Do not take a deep breath.</p> |  | <p><b>Normal Breath Out Through Nose</b></p> <p>Exhale as you normally would through your nose. Use the diaphragm to push all air out of the lungs (<i>stomach should move, chest should not</i>).</p> |  | <p><b>Shorter Breath In Through Nose</b></p> <p>Now, take a shorter, more shallow and light (~1-2 seconds) inhalation through the nose and stop.</p> |  | <p><b>Long Breath Out Through Nose</b></p> <p>Slowly release the breath over 5 seconds, using your diaphragm to empty out your lungs. Hold breath after complete exhale for 5 seconds.</p> |  | <p><b>Repeat Steps 1-4</b></p> <p>Take a normal, calm breath again through the nose (<i>step 1</i>), and repeat the entire process for several minutes.</p> |  |

1 - Egyptian Journal of Chest Diseases and Tuberculosis - "Effect of Buteyko breathing technique on patients with bronchial asthma", Volume 61, Issue 4, October 2012, Pages 235-241