

# LIVING WITH CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)\*:

## MANAGING YOUR DIET, FITNESS, AND MOODS

\*Includes chronic bronchitis,  
emphysema, or both.



# LEARNING TO LIVE WELL WITH COPD

To live well with COPD,\* you need to play an active role in your health. What you do to stay healthy is important. By taking an active role in your health and taking your medicines as you were told, you will help manage your COPD.

A big part of staying well is making healthy lifestyle choices. What you eat, what you do, and how you cope day to day all have a big impact on your health. In this booklet, we will explain why healthy habits are important. We will show you how you can make them a part of your daily life. We'll discuss ideas to help you enjoy your leisure time. And we'll show you ways that may help you deal with your moods, and with stress, too.

\*Chronic (kron-ick) obstructive (ob-struck-tiv) pulmonary (pull-muh-nair-ee) disease. It is a lung disease. It often includes two lung diseases. One is chronic bronchitis (bron-ki-tis). The other is emphysema (em-fuh-zee-muh).

# THIS BOOKLET WILL HELP YOU ANSWER CONCERNS, SUCH AS...

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# MANAGING YOUR DIET

## How Does What You Eat Affect COPD?

When you have this disease, you use more energy to breathe. You may use 10 times more than someone who does not have it. Eating a healthy diet will not cure COPD, but it may help you

- Have the energy you need to be more active
- Improve the way your lungs work
- Fight infections
- Keep a healthy weight
- Feel better in general

## What Should You Be Eating?

Find out what foods are good for you. Work with your healthcare practitioner. Or see a dietitian (die-eh-tih-shun). That is a nutrition expert. Make up a food plan that is right for you.



For most people with COPD, a healthy diet is made up of foods from each of the basic food groups, including

- Fruits and vegetables
- Cereals and whole-grain foods
- Dairy products such as milk or cheese
- Proteins such as meat or fish

**Limit** salt and caffeine. **Avoid** overeating and foods that cause gas, such as

- Carbonated drinks
- Fried or spicy foods
- Beans
- Cabbage

See page 7 for additional tips for healthy eating.

## How Much Should You Be Drinking?

Talk to your healthcare practitioner. Ask how much fluid you should drink. You may have other health problems. So, ask how many drinks (without caffeine or alcohol) to have each day. Fluids can help thin out your mucus and keep your airways open, too.



## How Does Your Weight Affect Your COPD?

You need to stay at a healthy weight when you have COPD. How much you weigh affects how well your body works.

Ask your healthcare practitioner or dietitian what weight is right for you. Try to get to this weight—and stay there. Ask about food plans and activities you should do.

If you weigh too much...

- Your heart and lungs have to work harder
- Breathing is harder

If you weigh too little...

- You may have less energy
- You may feel weak and tired
- You may be more likely to get an infection



## **Tips for Healthy Eating**

To help prevent shortness of breath when you eat or right after you eat, try to

- Eat 6 small meals instead of 3 big meals
- Eat while sitting up
- Eat slowly and chew foods well
- Use pursed-lip breathing while you eat (See page 19)
- Drink liquids at the end of your meal
- Control your salt intake

## **To Improve Your Appetite:**

- Avoid non-nutritious drinks, such as black coffee and tea
- Try to eat more protein (such as chicken and fish). Eat fewer simple sugars (such as in sodas and sweet cereals)
- Eat small meals and healthy snacks often
- Walk or do light physical activity
- Keep food in easy reach

**Check with your healthcare practitioner before you try any of these tips.**

# MANAGING YOUR FITNESS

## How Does Keeping Fit Help Your COPD?

Some people with COPD think exercise will make their breathing worse. But the opposite is actually true. In fact, lack of activity can make it worse. Getting physical activity (at all stages of COPD) may actually



- Help you feel less short of breath
- Give you more strength and endurance (staying power) while you do your daily activities
- Improve heart health
- Keep you in a better mood

Talk to your healthcare practitioner. Ask what and how much exercise you should do before you start. Your healthcare practitioner may suggest

- Stretching (also good to do to warm-up and cool-down before and after you exercise)
- Walking
- Slow dancing
- Riding a stationary bike
- How to use your inhalers while exercising



# The Benefits of Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Your healthcare practitioner may want you to have pulmonary rehabilitation (pull-muh-nair-ee ree-ha-bill-ih-tay-shun). This program is planned just for you. It may include

- Education
- Medical and nursing management
- Exercise training
- Nutrition counseling
- Help with your psychological and social needs

Pulmonary rehabilitation can help you

- Learn how to breathe easier
- Possibly reduce your need for some medicines, healthcare practitioner visits, and hospital stays
- Relieve stress and anxiety
- Increase your ability to do daily activities and exercise
- Have a better quality of life

A care plan can be made for you. It may include

- Breathing exercises
- Answers to your questions on how and when to take your medicines (including oxygen)
- Recommendations for healthy lifestyle changes, such as exercise and food plans





## Getting Enough Rest?

Keeping fit also means you get enough rest. If you have trouble sleeping, try these tips.

- Don't stay in your bed awake
  - If you can't fall asleep, get out of bed. Make yourself a cup of warm milk or herb tea. Do something relaxing, like reading
- Don't take naps
- Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise at least 3 times a week (Check with your healthcare practitioner first)
- Don't do anything that may keep you up in the 2 hours before you go to bed. Don't do things like exercise or work
- Don't drink anything with caffeine in the 4 to 5 hours before you go to bed
- Try to keep the same bedtime and wake-up times

## Enjoy Yourself!

Make the most of your leisure time. Having this disease does not mean you can't do fun things. Do things you enjoy that aren't too physically hard. You may want to

- Paint, knit, or work on a craft project
- Listen to music, play cards, or use the computer to learn about new things
- Meet friends for dinner, a movie, or a play
- Do volunteer work
- Read, write, or learn a musical instrument or a foreign language



## Travel Tips

Most people with COPD can still travel and take trips. The key is to plan ahead. Be sure to discuss your travel plans with your healthcare practitioner. Take time to prepare for what you may need. Then you can enjoy your trip and keep it stress-free.

Bring a health history from your healthcare practitioner. It should include

- A list of your medicines
- Any allergies you have
- Any travel or activity limitations

Other tips include

- Talk to your healthcare practitioner to find out if you need different medicines for your trip
- Bring all of your medicines and medical equipment with you
- Make a list of healthcare practitioners and hospitals near where you will be staying
- If you take oxygen, talk to your healthcare practitioner and oxygen supplier about traveling
- Prepare for the climate and air quality where you are going
- Eat well, sleep well, and don't drink alcohol in excess



## MANAGING YOUR MOODS

Sometimes, having COPD may make you feel frustrated or helpless. You may feel this way especially if you are not able to be as active as you once were. It can be helpful to

- Take the time to understand what is causing your frustration
- Find new ways of doing things that will allow you to stay active, such as breaking down activities into steps with rest times in between

### **Think Positively!**

Try to change the way you look at things. For example:

- Think about the things you can do
- Try not to focus on what you can't do
- Stay positive, so you can enjoy the things you can still do

## Do You Have Depression?

We all feel sad or “blue” at times, but depression (de-preh-shun) is more than that. Different people have different symptoms. See your healthcare practitioner if you have any of these:

- Feel sad, nervous, or “empty” for a period of time
- Feel like things are hopeless
- Feel guilty, worthless, or helpless
- Lose interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities you used to enjoy, including sex
- Have less energy, feel tired, or “slowed down”
- Have trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Have problems sleeping or oversleeping
- Lose your appetite and lose weight, or you overeat and gain weight
- Have thoughts of death or suicide
- Feel restless or irritable
- Have physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive problems, and long-lasting pain



## What Can You Do?

Depression can be treated. If you think you may be depressed, talk to your healthcare practitioner. Counseling, medicine, or both may help you feel better.

## How Can You Fight Worries, Stress, and Anxiety?

You may worry about shortness of breath, lifestyle changes, and loneliness. Stress and anxiety use up energy. You need energy to breathe. That's why you need to find ways to deal with worry, stress, and anxiety.

## Relax!

Things to try:

- Don't worry about future events that may not happen
- Share your feelings and concerns about COPD. Talk to your family, friends, and healthcare practitioners. Get answers to your questions. That may reduce your fear. You may want to join a support group for people with the disease
- Stay positive
- Look for humor in little things
- Do things to reduce stress, such as yoga or breathing exercises (see pages 19 to 23)





## Keep Your Energy Up!

When you have COPD, you need to take steps to save your energy. You may feel better and get more done if you

- Pace yourself and don't rush
- Do things slowly and sit down as much as you can
- Find easy ways to dress, cook, and do chores. Use a cart with wheels to move things. Use a pole with long handles to reach for things
- Keep things you need in easy reach, so you don't have to bend or lift
- Rest after meals





## Breathing and Coughing

There are many breathing exercises to choose from. Pursed-lip breathing and diaphragmatic (die-a-fra-ma-tic) breathing (belly breathing) are two exercises that may help make it easier to breathe. When used correctly, these exercises can help to keep you from getting short of breath during activity.

Keep doing these exercises until they are easy for you. Coughing is also important to keep your lungs clear.

### Pursed-lip Breathing Exercise

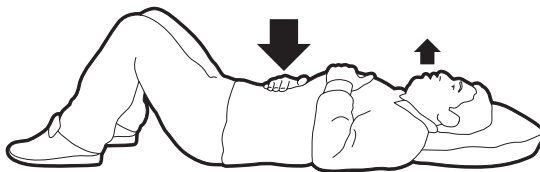
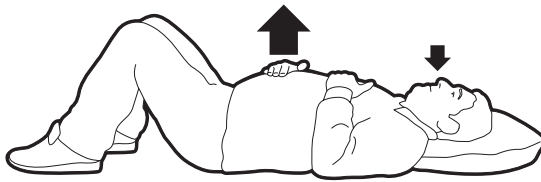
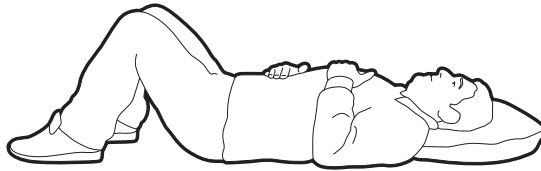
Pursed-lip breathing is one of the best ways to control shortness of breath. Use it when you start to feel short of breath. Or use it when it becomes harder to do activities.



1. Sit in a chair with your head supported.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose until your lungs are filled up.
3. Don't hold your breath. Purse (pucker) your lips as if you were going to whistle, and breathe out slowly.
4. Take twice as long to breathe out as you did to breathe in.
5. Repeat.

## Diaphragmatic Breathing (Belly Breathing) Exercise

Diaphragmatic breathing (belly breathing) helps the diaphragm (the dome-shaped muscle at the bottom of your lungs) move. This lets you take more air into your lungs and makes breathing easier.



- 1.** Lie on your back with your knees bent. Put a pillow under your head. After you do this exercise for some time, you can try it sitting in a chair.
- 2.** Put the palm of one hand on your belly. Put the palm of your other hand on your chest.
- 3.** Breathe in slowly through your nose. Your belly should push out against your hand. Your chest should not move.
- 4.** Tighten your belly muscles. Breathe out slowly through your mouth. Keep your lips pursed. You should feel your belly go down.

If you feel dizzy as you do this, breathe more slowly.

Start by doing this exercise for 5 to 10 minutes, 3 or 4 times a day. You can slowly increase the amount of time you do this.

## **Coughing Exercise**

Follow the steps below to clear the mucus from your lungs.

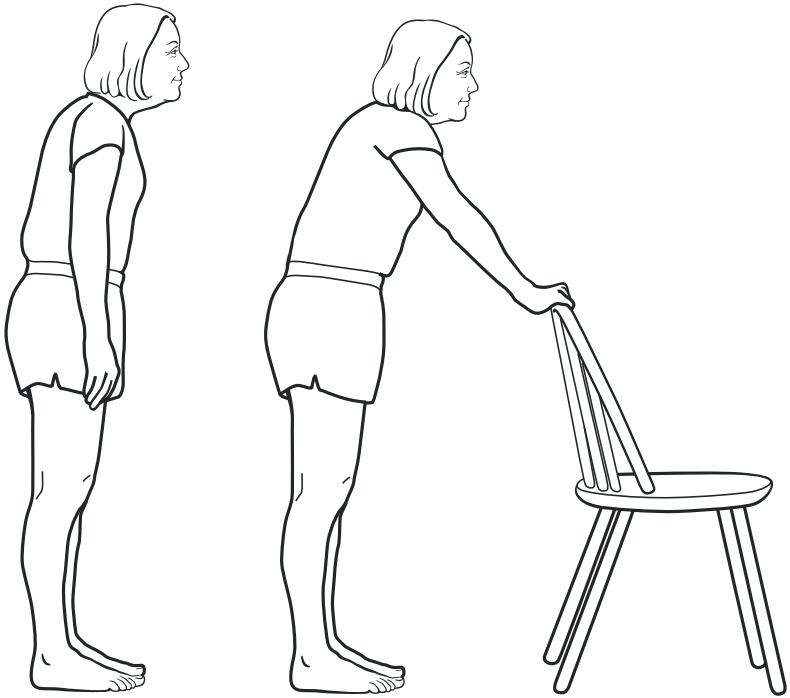
- 1.** Sit comfortably in a chair.
- 2.** Lean your head forward slightly.
- 3.** Place both feet firmly on the ground.
- 4.** Breathe in slowly and deeply.
- 5.** Try to hold your breath for 3 seconds.
- 6.** Keep your mouth slightly open and cough twice.

Take a breath, and repeat 2 to 4 times.

## Get in a Position to Breathe!

The way you sit or stand can sometimes make breathing easier. These positions can help you avoid getting tired and having shortness of breath.

### When you're standing. . .



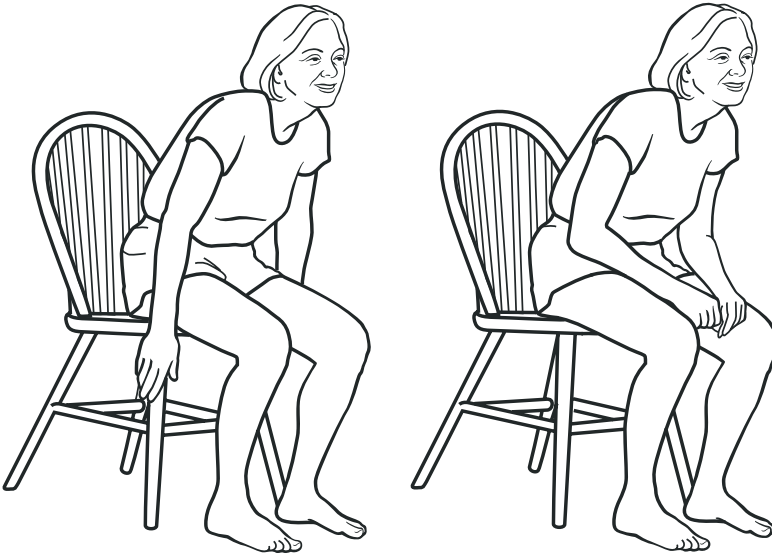
- Stand up straight and lean slightly forward
- Put your hands on your thighs

OR

To use less energy when you stand:

- Lean forward and put both hands on an object 3 to 4 feet high, like the back of a chair
- Tighten your upper arms and shoulders

## When you're sitting. . .



- Keep your back straight and lean forward
- Spread your knees a bit

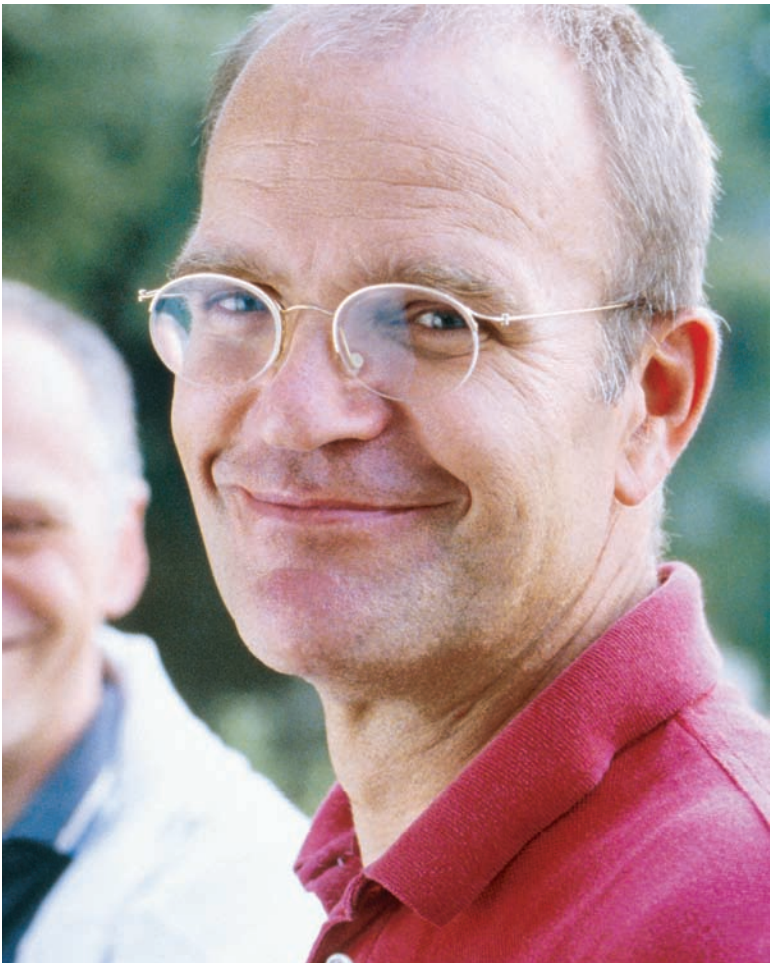
OR

- Keep your back straight and lean forward
- Place your hands, elbows, or lower arms on your thighs or knees or over a table

## Getting Started

You can do a lot to live better with COPD. Ask your healthcare practitioners for ideas, too.

You may need to change some of your habits. It may feel strange at first to do this. But hang in there. What you do day by day can make a big difference in how you feel. You can help control your symptoms and enjoy life. Take that first step right now!





## **Where Can I Find More Information and Support?**

There are a lot of ways to get information and support. Contact these helpful resources:

**American Lung Association®**

1-800-548-8252

**[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)**

**Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD)**

**[www.goldcopd.com](http://www.goldcopd.com)**

**National Lung Health Education Program (NLHEP)**

1-972-910-8555

**[www.nlhep.org](http://www.nlhep.org)**

**National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)**

1-301-592-8573

**[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)**

**The National Emphysema Foundation**

1-203-866-5000

**[www.emphysemafoundation.org](http://www.emphysemafoundation.org)**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

1-800-311-3435

**[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**

**Pulmonary Education and Research Foundation**

**[www.perf2ndwind.org](http://www.perf2ndwind.org)**

## Ask Your Healthcare Practitioner

Here are some questions you may want to discuss with your healthcare practitioner. Add any more you have. Bring this page with you to your next visit. Write down the answers you get in the lines below each question.

What kinds of foods should I eat or not eat?

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How much liquid should I drink each day? What kinds?

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What weight is healthy for me?

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Should I see a dietitian to get a food plan?

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What kind and how much activity should I do?

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Do I need a special exercise program?

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Should I do breathing exercises?  
How often?

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How often should I have a lung function test?

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What else can I do to help reduce  
my symptoms?

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