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Exercises for Breathing

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EXERCISES FOR BREATHING.

Do these exercises three times daily, in the morning before breakfast, mid-day, and at night before going to bed; also at the first sign of an impending attack which can frequently be aborted. These exercises should be continued indefinitely. It is during periods of freedom from attacks, when breathing can be done in a normal manner, that permanent improvement of the chest is obtained.

Blow the nose before beginning. Begin each exercise with a short small breath through the nose, followed by a long expiration through the mouth. When inhaling hold the upper part of the chest quiet, so that the breathing is done mainly with the diaphragm and the lower part of the chest. When exhaling contract the abdominal wall, allowing it to sink in toward the spine. The next breath is drawn in automatically by allowing the abdominal wall to relax, and the lower part of the chest to expand. The exercises may be done supine, sitting or standing, and preferably in front of an open window, facing a mirror. (Circle desired position)

1. Abdominal (diaphragmatic) breathing: Supine with knees flexed, or sitting with the back resting against a chair. Relax upper chest and shoulders, place one hand on upper abdomen. Take a small breath, and then breathe out contracting the abdominal muscles, and letting the fingers sink in toward the spine. Relax the abdomen, and take in a short breath. Repeat 10 x. Make the expiratory phase as long as possible.
2. Side expansion with pressure: Positions same as above. Place hands on lower ribs, fingers directed inward. Breathe out contracting abdominal muscles after first relaxing upper chest. At the very finish of expiration press firmly with the hands against the lower ribs to "squeeze" out all the air. Breathe in, expanding the lower ribs outward against a little pressure from the hands which is lightened at the height of inspiration. Repeat 10 x.
3. Elbow circling: (To be done between breathing exercises for relaxation of upper chest). Sit with feet apart, hands on shoulders, elbows level with shoulders, leaning forward with the back straight. Circle elbows forward, up, backward, and downward, 4 to 8 times. Relax, drop arms to sides, lean against chair back. Repeat several times.
4. Forward bending: Sitting with feet apart, arms relaxed at sides. Breathe out slowly while bending forward until the head is between or over the knees, and strongly contracting the abdominal muscles. Push the lower back against the chair back, raise the trunk by straightening first the middle portion, then the upper, the shoulders, neck and finally the head. Breathe in during the straightening phase. Keep the erect position, breathe out quickly sinking the head against the edge of a door facing, feet about 6 inches from wall, arms relaxed at sides. Do the same procedure as when sitting. This slightly more difficult and may be used when the former is learned.
5. Side bending with breathing: Right hand on right side of chest, left arm relaxed at side. Bend head, and trunk above the waist slowly to the right side while breathing out. Bend over to the left while breathing in. Press the hand against the side when breathing out, and swell the ribs against the hand when breathing in. Repeat 6 x, then do on the left side 6 x.
6. Combine controlled diaphragmatic breathing with graded exercises - - walking, stair climbing, etc.
7. Always be posture conscious: Stand, sit, and walk with abdomen FLAT. Buttocks tucked under, head high, chin in, shoulders easy, knees straight, feet slightly separated.