

Breathing Tips for New Runners, by Coach Cliff; reference article by Thad McLaurin for 'Active.com

You are new to running, your legs are fit and ready, but you can't seem to control your breathing. If you are a bit frustrated you are not alone. Most new runners experience the same frustration. A little comfort for your mind... many experienced runners also struggled with the same breathing issues when they first started.

Any kind of strenuous physical activity requires endurance. The health of your lungs, heart and skeletal system govern your performance. Improving your lung capacity is possible through breathing exercises, which you should practice daily to become comfortable with breathing on the run. You will also find that breathing exercises will have a calming effect on the mind.

Breathing exercises are a natural treatment for respiratory problems, increase the rate of oxygen taken in by our lungs, boost your metabolic power generating more energy and improves your power of concentration. Proper breathing will increase the supply of nutrients and blood to the bones and muscles.

Deep breathing has a direct effect on the function of our diaphragm. During the breathing cycle the diaphragm shifts toward your lungs and enables you to exhale. While inhaling the diaphragm shifts away from the lungs, allowing the lungs to expand and take in oxygen. The oxygen supply to your body is considerably increased and carbon dioxide can be expelled properly.

Here are some 'Deep Breathing' exercises to practice. Breathing exercises form the beginning steps of Yoga and meditation. I recommend that you engage these techniques correctly and they should be done with the guidance of a fitness trainer.

Basic breathing: Relax your body. You can either stand or sit while breathing. Inhale through your nose and count to 4. Exhale the air slowly through your mouth. Make sure that the entire volume is exhaled on the count of 8. Repeat this exercise for 5 minutes daily.

Breath stimulation: Sit on the floor and cross your legs. Inhale the air deeply through your nose. Hold your breath for 5 to 8 seconds. Slowly exhale the air through your mouth and continue breathing in this fashion for 5 minutes.

Cadenced breathing is the most effective breathing exercise for runners. Cadence breathing is inspiration and expiration of the lungs to the 'tempo' of the right and left arm and/or the right or left foot movement. The most important aspect of cadence breathing is the timing. The number of cadence performed by you depends on the frequency of your steps. The motion of your feet, duration of inhale/exhale and the position of your arms should proceed in a synchronized pattern. The 2-2 cadence is usually practiced by the most experienced runners. I recommend the 3-3 cadence for those new to running.

2-2 cadence: You have to take 2 steps per inhale and 2 steps per exhale.

3-3 cadence; you have to take 3 steps per inhale and 3 steps per exhale.

These exercises are totally beneficial to all. You can try the cadence breathing while jogging and incorporate the deep breathing exercises in your workout schedule. The amount of oxygen inhaled and carbon dioxide exhaled by us plays a vital role in proper functioning of every organ present inside our body. You should definitely notice improvement in your health after practicing these disciplines for a least one month.

Run safe and train smart.

Coach Cliff