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# 10 breathing exercises for asthmatics



# More power for your bronchial tubes



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Breathing exercises train your lungs and can help to relieve the distress you feel even during an acute asthma attack. Relaxing postures also play an important role. Here we present ten exercises.

In addition to sports and relaxation techniques, regular breathing exercises have a positive effect on the progression of your asthma condition. Ten minutes of breathing exercises a day can improve your breathing and reduce the need for emergency medications.

These exercises can't cure your asthma, but they can help to relieve the symptoms.

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## **Exercises sitting down, standing or lying down**

We have put together ten exercises for you.

Most of them can be done in a sitting or standing position. The last exercise is performed in a sleeping or resting position.

# 10 breathing exercises for asthmatics



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1. Pursed lips

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2. Abdominal breathing

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3. Deep breathing

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4. Alternate nostril breathing

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5. Coach driver's position

6. Sitting at a table

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7. Goalkeeper position

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8. Riding position

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9. Leaning against a wall

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10. Stretching in an extended position

# Preparing for the exercises



## **Ensure a quiet, undisturbed atmosphere in a well-ventilated room.**

Wear comfortable clothing. Have a yoga mat ready if you have one. You can also easily integrate many exercises into your daily routine and simply do them in between, for example at work.

Repeat the exercises five to ten times.

**Important:** always breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth – we'll come back to this in a moment. You should always exhale for longer than you inhale. Always take short breaks between the exercises. Preferably you should practice the exercises when you are not suffering from shortness of breath so that you can apply what you have learned effectively in an emergency without undue concentration and effort.

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**Note:** the exercises described here are not a substitute for a doctor's visit or instructions given by a trained respiratory therapist. They are intended as self-help encouragement in dealing proactively with the disease



# 01. Pursed lips

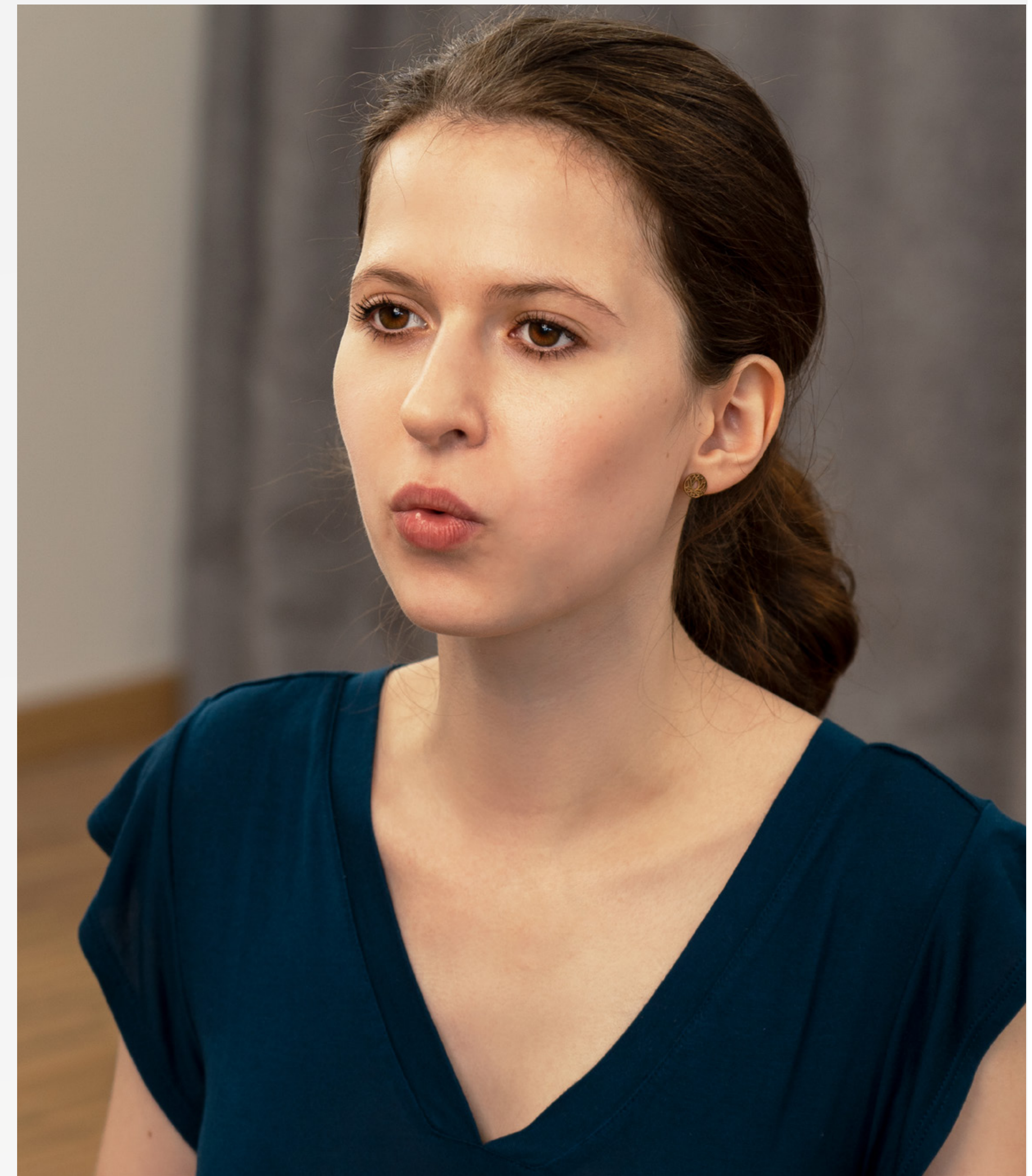


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**This exercise is particularly helpful in cases of acute respiratory distress or exercise-induced asthma.**

It is the basis for all breathing exercises. Breathe in through your nose and breathe out again slowly and in a controlled manner through pursed, half-closed lips. It's fine to make a **“phhhhh”** sound as you breathe out. This helps to control your breath. This method slows down exhalation. The airways remain wide open; the lungs are gently emptied and are ready to be supplied with fresh, oxygen-rich air.

If, on the other hand, your exhalation is too short, you risk provoking hyperinflation of the lungs, resulting in increased shortness of breath.





## 02. Abdominal breathing

Many people underestimate the force of their breath – they breathe shallowly and only fill the upper part of their lungs with air when inhaling. The aim of deep abdominal breathing is **to activate all respiratory muscles when inhaling and to fill the entire lung space with air if possible** – and to transport all the air out of the lungs when exhaling.

Stretch out comfortably on your back on a yoga mat. Place your hands, fingers splayed, flat on your upper abdomen below the rib cage. Now breathe in steadily through your nose. Your abdomen should arch upwards visibly. Then exhale the air through slightly pursed lips. As you do so, your abdomen will lower again and your rib cage moves downwards. With deep abdominal breathing we use our entire lung volume – and find it easier to breathe.



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## 03. Deep breathing

Lie comfortably on your back again. Now pull both knees towards your navel as far as you can, breathing out as you do so. Then lower your legs again and stretch them out – breathing in at the same time. **Pulling your knees up causes more air to be pressed out of your lungs.**



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## 04. Alternate nostril breathing



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Breathing through alternate nostrils is practiced in yoga. You breathe alternately through the left and right nostril. This technique **can increase lung capacity and helps to better control your breathing**. It can help in the case of allergies, hay fever and asthma.

Sit comfortably on a chair or cross-legged on the floor. Hold your right hand towards your face and close your right nostril with your right thumb first. Fold down your index and middle fingers. Now breathe in through your left nostril for four seconds. Then hold your left nostril closed as well, with the ring finger of your right hand. Hold your breath for 16 seconds. Then take your thumb from the right nostril and exhale through the right nostril for eight seconds. Hold your left nostril closed with the ring finger and little finger.

Then inhale through your right nostril and hold the left nostril closed. Now breathe in through your right nostril for four seconds. Hold your breath, close both nostrils. Hold your breath for 16 seconds. Then exhale through your left nostril for 8 seconds, closing the right nostril with your thumb. Repeat this exercise three times.





## 05. Coach driver's position

Another exercise that is helpful when you are suffering from acute respiratory distress. Adopting a posture similar to that of a coachman on his bench **helps you to breathe more easily**. For this, sit on the front edge of a chair and bend forward with your upper body. Place your forearms on your thighs, with your hands hanging loosely. Arch your back like a cat. By supporting your upper body with your arms, you are taking the weight of your shoulders off your rib cage, allowing you to breathe more freely.



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## 06. Sitting at a table

Take a seat on a chair in front of the dining or kitchen table. Now place your arms on the table at an angle and rest your head on them. **A pillow makes the exercise even more efficient.** Can you feel the relaxation? Breathe as calmly and evenly as possible. This position relieves strain on the rib cage, making it easier to breathe in and out.

This increases the amount of air in your lungs – and narrowed bronchial tubes can dilate.



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## 07. Goalkeeper position

In the goalkeeper position, using your arms for support also takes the weight of your shoulders off your rib cage, **which can help in the case of acute shortness of breath or exertion**. Stand with your legs slightly apart. Bend your upper body forward slightly, placing both hands above your knees – thumbs pointing inwards – for support. This position allows your upper body and breathing to relax.



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## 08. Riding position

Using a **chair without armrests** as a prop, sit on the chair with your back straight facing the backrest. Then place your forearms on top of each other on the backrest. Now inhale through your nose and exhale through pursed lips in a measured way. In the riding position, as in the coach driver's position, the weight of the shoulders is taken off the rib cage. The volume of air in the lungs increases and the bronchial tubes dilate.



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## 09. Leaning against a wall

Stand in front of a wall with your legs slightly apart. Cross your arms in front of your head. Now lean against the wall in this position with your forehead resting on your forearms. This posture widens your rib cage, **allowing the air you breathe to flow more easily into the bronchial tubes.** Breathe in and out consciously several times. As you exhale, remember to purse your lips.



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# 10. Stretching in an extended position

**Ensure a peaceful night's sleep:** place an extra thick pillow or bolster in your bed. Turn over onto your favorite side, bending your upper leg. Place your upper arm on the bolster. Supporting your arm on the pillow ensures that the weight of your arm doesn't constrict your rib cage.



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