

General Comments:

Emphysema is a condition in which damage has occurred to the alveoli or lung tissue. Emphysema is often referred to as COAD (Chronic Obstructive Airway Disease) or COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)

The more severe the condition the more damage to the lungs that has occurred. The alveoli (or air sacs), of which there are over 300 million in each person, lose their tone and can no longer work efficiently.

This results in a smaller surface area for the gas exchange to occur. The typical symptoms of emphysema are breathlessness, noisy or wheezy breathing, fatigue on activity, inability to exercise without severe breathlessness. This is due to the inefficient oxygen exchange. It is normally assumed that the damage to the lungs makes improvement with the condition unlikely, but by learning to breathe correctly with the Buteyko Method it is possible to significantly improve the oxygen exchange despite the existing damage.

People who attend the Buteyko course for Emphysema/COAD/COPD typically experience a reduction in use of reliever medication, mucous production and coughing.

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Dealing with COPD

There are a number of things that will immediately make a difference to a person with chronic lung disease:-

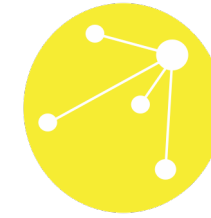
- Stop smoking
- Keep your shoulders relaxed
- Control your coughing
- Pace yourself so that you do not get puffed
- Exercise regularly but without stress
- Breathe through the nose all the time
- Look after your health
- Use the Buteyko Method

Quotes

“The improvement in my overall health has been dramatic and I rate my health as pre- and post-Buteyko Pre-Buteyko meant colds, coughs, and bronchitis every six weeks. Post-Buteyko means increased energy, lack of dizziness and coughs and colds only two or three times a year” Clare

“Although I still have emphysema I have found tremendous difference in my breathlessness. Now it’s just mild in the mornings. My doctor and chemist are amazed at the difference; they can’t believe it improved so quickly in the past three months. I personally am enjoying each day, instead of dreading the dawning of a new day” Helen

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The Breath Connection

COPD & Emphysema Management

Our breath connects everything in our lives: our health, emotions, our whole being and every living thing in the environment, as we all, plants, animals & fellow humans, breathe the same air.

Good breathing means good health.

www.TheBreathConnection.com

Try the hyperventilation test

Symptom	Yes	No
Do you frequently wake at night?		
Do you snore?		
Are you often tired, even when you have had a long sleep?		
Do you sigh or yawn frequently?		
Do you often feel weak or tired even when you haven't done a lot of exercise?		
Do you often feel bloated or have trouble with your digestive system?		
Do you drink lots of water because your mouth is often dry?		
Do you feel spaced out, lack concentration or do people say that you don't listen?		
Does your nose often block so that you have to breathe through your mouth?		
Do you have allergies to things like dust, pollen or cats?		
Do you get chest pain that is not related to heart problems?		
Do your hands and feet get cold even when it's warm?		
Does your heart pound or have an irregular beat yet there is nothing wrong with it?		
Do you often have sweaty palms?		
Do you feel anxious even when there is nothing to worry about?		

If you have answered "Yes" to more than four of the above questions you may be hyperventilating

How do I know if I am over-breathing?

Symptoms associated with hyperventilation:

Respiratory System: shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, over-sensitivity of the airways, excessive sneezing, production of copious mucus, long-term blocked or running sinuses, excessive yawning & sighing.

Nervous system: light headedness, dizziness, unsteadiness, poor concentration, numbness, tingling and coldness especially in the hands and fingers and often in the face. In severe cases, loss of memory or loss of consciousness.

Cardiac: heart racing, pounding or skipped heartbeats.

Psychological: varying degrees of anxiety, tension or apprehension.

General: mouth dryness, abdominal bloating, flatulence, easily tired, poor sleep patterns, weakness and chronic exhaustion.

How can the Buteyko Method help me?

The Buteyko Method has been successfully used for the treatment of asthma, sleep apnoea, emphysema, COPD, allergies, chronic bronchitis, hyperventilation syndrome, panic attacks, bronchiectasis and for the relief of hay fever and chronic sinusitis.

We breathe to meet the needs of our metabolism - to provide the body with sufficient oxygen and to remove excess carbon dioxide.

When you exercise you need more oxygen and your body produces more carbon dioxide than when you rest so you breathe more.

Breathing heavily, deeply or quickly when you don't need to is hyperventilation.

Patients with COPD are much more likely to experience regular panic attacks than the general public. Doctors estimate that the prevalence of full-fledged panic disorder is as much as 10 times greater in COPD patients than in the overall population. A panic attack involves an intense and sudden surge of fear that grips a person seemingly out of nowhere, and without warning. The fear that grips the person is far out of proportion to whatever prompted it, and may not be related to any particular incident. Panic attacks pass within a matter of minutes, as the human body cannot maintain such a hyper-vigilant "fight or flight" response for long periods of time, but recurring attacks can continue for hours. The Buteyko Method gives people the tools to deal with this problem.

What does the Buteyko Method do?

It has been shown that those with emphysema and COPD breathe considerably more than is regarded as normal when resting – often 3 or more times the normal or 4 – 6 litres /minute. This is chronic over-breathing or hyperventilation. As can be seen from the chart opposite, hyperventilation is associated with many of the symptoms suffered by patients with COPD or emphysema. By learning to return breathing to normal many of these symptoms are reduced.

How effective is Buteyko?

COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) is sometimes known as COAD (Chronic Obstructive Airways Disease) is a term used to describe a condition where the phenomena of chronic bronchitis, airways obstruction, asthma and emphysema may be mixed to varying degrees.

Some people may have permanent lung damage. Emphysema is a condition in which the alveoli or air sacs lose their elasticity and remain over-inflated even on breathing out. This results in a smaller area for gas exchange to take place, making it harder to deliver sufficient oxygen to the body. The lungs also become increasingly inflated and the breathing becomes less efficient and more effortful.

Common symptoms of both emphysema and COPD are breathlessness, coughing, decreased ability to exercise, increased mucus production and repeated chest infections. Accompanying these symptoms there is a more restricted lifestyle for most sufferers.

When breathless, people often have the urge to breathe more as they feel they are not breathing enough. However, they may have noticed that the more they breathe the more breathless they feel. This is because of the "Bohr Effect", a scientific law stating that the lowered levels of carbon dioxide in the blood, resulting from hyperventilation, strengthens the bond between haemoglobin and oxygen. This means that less oxygen now reaches the brain and other body parts.

The Buteyko Method training teaches better breathing habits and other lifestyle matters that lead to improved effectiveness of the limited lung capacity the patient may have by improving the body's oxygenation.