

STAYING FIT WITH LUNG CONDITIONS

Years ago, people with lung conditions were advised to take it easy, and sit out of strenuous activities. Thanks to medical research, those days are over.

It's established that regular exercise is beneficial for people with lung disease. Staying active and fit can help you breathe easier and do more with less effort, improving your quality of life and reducing your risk for other health problems.

Breathing easily is something that most people take for granted. But when you're living with a lung condition, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or restrictive lung disease, breathing is something you're always aware of, and shortness of breath may be a fact of life. But exercise can help.

Boost Fitness, Breathe Easier

Regular exercise won't heal the underlying lung disease or improve lung function, but it reduces shortness of breath and improves your ability to perform everyday activities. At the same time, regular exercise reduces your risk of other serious conditions, such as diabetes, osteoporosis, and heart disease.

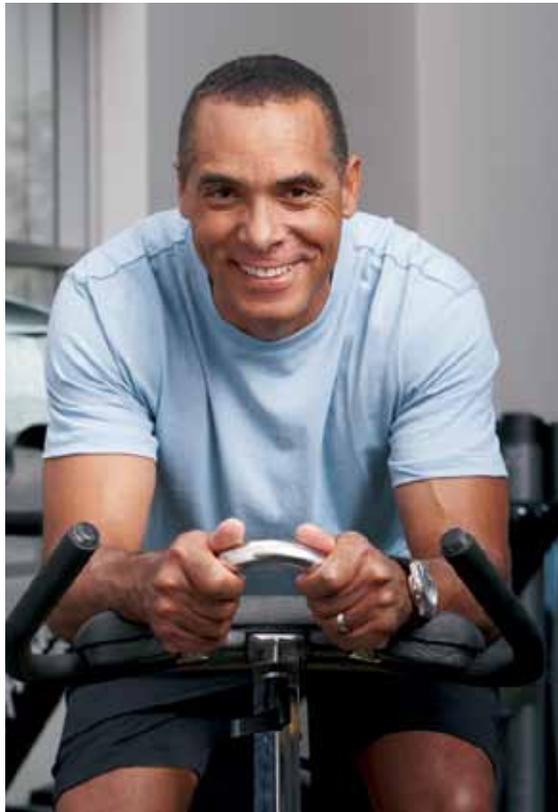
People with lung conditions are often sedentary due to shortness of breath with activity. But a sedentary lifestyle results in loss of cardiovascular fitness and muscular strength, which in turn worsens shortness of breath—it's a vicious cycle.

Breaking that cycle with fitness training helps the body work more efficiently and helps you make better use of the oxygen taken in with each breath. This, in turn, leads to less shortness of breath. Regular exercise also helps reduce anxiety and depression, conditions that often accompany lung disease.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Outpatient pulmonary rehabilitation is a terrific program for people with lung conditions.

Under the supervision of nurses and exercise physiologists, you'll perform cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility exercise as well as respiratory muscle training. The staff closely monitors symptoms, changes in medication and responses to exercise to make sure that your progress is steady and that all prescribed exercise is safe and effective for you. They also stay in touch with your health care providers to ensure the best care possible.



Educational classes are a key part of pulmonary rehabilitation, where patients and their family members learn about medications, breathing techniques, managing symptoms, oxygen therapy, energy conservation and work simplification.

Social support is another element of the program. You get to know others who are dealing with similar challenges. If you're interested in pulmonary rehabilitation, ask your health care provider for a referral. These programs are usually offered in a hospital or clinical setting and are often covered by medical insurance.

Get Up and Get Active

If your lung condition is less severe and you just want to become more active, talk with your health care provider about what exercises are best for you and how to coordinate medication with your exercise schedule.

People with asthma, for example, often need a dose of inhaled Albuterol prior to strenuous exercise to keep the airways open. Swimming and other water activities are good choices for people with asthma, because of the moisture in the air and walking is a safe and effective exercise for many.

Be Active, Enjoy Life

Having a lung condition doesn't mean you have to live life on the sidelines.

In fact, there are many Olympic athletes with asthma. Competing on a world stage may not be your goal, but being fit and active may mean you can climb stairs, go shopping, and play with your kid or grand-kids without excessive shortness of breath. Regular exercise can help you get the most out of life—now and in the years to come.

Additional Resources

[Fast Facts for Pulmonary Rehabilitation](#)—American Association for Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation

[Find a Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program](#)—American Association for Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation

[Exercise and Care](#)—National Emphysema Foundation

[Obstructive and Restrictive Lung Disease](#)—WebMD

If you are interested in information on other health and fitness topics, contact: American Council on Exercise, 4851 Paramount Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, 800-825-3636; or, go online at www.acefitness.org/GetFit and access the complete list of ACE Fit Facts.™



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