



Breathing Easy Outlook

STAYING HEALTHY ■ LIVING WELL

SUMMER 2011

Five Steps to Knock Out Stress

Stress is a part of life, but when it gets out of hand, it can harm your health. It can even make COPD symptoms worse. When you feel stressed or anxious, you may notice that your breathing quickens or you become short of breath. Try these five strategies from the American Psychological Association to keep stress from getting the best of you.

1. Learn your signs. Everyone responds differently to stress.

Do you get irritable or have trouble concentrating? Do you get a headache or heartburn?

- 2. Identify the source.** Are you worried about finances, health, a problem with a family member, or work deadlines?
- 3. Take action.** If you can't avoid the stressful situation, try to resolve it. For instance, if your stress is due to a packed schedule, learn to set limits, say no, or ask for help.

4. Find time to relax. Relaxation and breathing exercises can slow breathing and loosen tense muscles. Also, visiting with friends, listening to music, meditating, and hobbies are other ways to unwind.

5. Be good to yourself. Find time to exercise, get adequate rest, and eat a healthy diet. Taking time for yourself will help you handle stress better.



Dizzy? Weak? It Could Be Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the most common heat-related illness. Symptoms include heavy sweating, clammy skin, fatigue, dizziness, vomiting, muscle cramps, and weakness.

If you think you may have heat exhaustion, rest in an air-conditioned room. Have a few sips of a cool, nonalcoholic drink. Apply some cool, wet washcloths to your skin or take a cool shower. Continue to rest and drink fluids over the next 24 to 48 hours.

Get emergency help right away if you have signs of heat exhaustion that are severe, worsen, or last longer than one hour. Also, get immediate help if you have heart problems or high blood pressure.

Left untreated, heat exhaustion can turn into heatstroke, a life-threatening emergency.

Anyone can develop a heat-related illness. But those facing the highest risk include adults age 65 and older, kids age 4 and younger, overweight individuals, and people who have chronic health problems.

Good Health Guidelines

For people with COPD, it's important to make sure the following tests and vaccines are kept current:

- Flu vaccine
- Pneumonia vaccine
- Spirometry—breathing test to check how your lungs function—should be done when symptoms change

Be sure to talk with your health care provider about these topics:

- Writing an Action Plan
- Having a nutritional assessment
- Reviewing your exercise routine
- Taking part in a pulmonary education program
- Quitting smoking

A CLOSER LOOK

The Flu Vaccine

It comes as regularly as the falling of the leaves or the first hint of chill in the air: Fall is time for your annual flu shot. The flu vaccine contains three types of influenza virus that are weakened to prevent disease. These virus types are chosen based on information about which ones are likely to be around in the coming flu season. The vaccine doesn't provide 100 percent protection, but it can prevent some cases of flu and keep many others from becoming severe. In people with COPD, a flu shot can cut the risk of flu-related death or serious illness by half.

Although these are suggested guidelines for care, please check with your benefits plan for coverage.

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Getting Along Day by Day

Getting short of breath and tiring easily make it hard to carry out daily activities. Learn how to make your day-to-day activities easier with these tips from the American Lung Association.



Finding ways to use less energy when bathing, cooking, and cleaning can make a difference in how you feel throughout the day. And you can make it happen with some easy strategies.

Getting Going

Your mornings will be easier if you get organized. Before going to bed, lay out your clothes for the next day. Try loose-fitting clothes and shoes that are easy to slip into so getting dressed takes less effort.

In the bathroom, keep your shaving kit, hair dryer, or makeup within easy reach. You may also consider getting a shower stool and handheld shower nozzle so you can sit while showering. If drying off with a towel leaves you short of breath, wrap up in a terry-cloth robe instead. Keeping hair short makes care and styling easy.

Kitchen Smarts

We need to eat for energy, but preparing food takes energy, too. So stock your kitchen with helpful tools. “Grabber” tongs are perfect for reaching items on shelves. Store frequently used items between shoulders and hips to make them easy to reach. And using a rolling utility cart to gather your utensils and ingredients before cooking can save you steps. It’s also handy for transporting dishes to and from the table.

While chopping and mixing, sit on a stool or chair. Better yet, save effort by buying presliced vegetables and fruit, grated cheese, and other healthy convenience items. When your food is ready, skip the serving dishes and serve food directly from pots and pans to make cleanup easier.

Clever Cleaning

Here’s where it really pays to pace yourself. Do cleaning chores at the time of day when you have the most energy. Use a wheeled utility cart to carry laundry and cleaning supplies through the house and to pick up and put away items as you move from room to room. When you vacuum, use slow and steady movements and take a break every few minutes.

Be smart about your breathing while tidying up. Avoid strong cleaning agents and spray cleaners, as they can be irritating to the lungs. And for heavy tasks that require bending or scrubbing, use pursed-lip breathing to avoid getting breathless.

➤ Make quick meals to that won't leave you tired and breathless!

Go to page 7 to get tips on easy and healthy meal preparation.

Have a Ball!

Bust Your Exercise Rut

There's no doubt about it: Regular exercise is one of the best things to help you feel better and boost lung health. If you haven't been exercising or are bored with your current routine, try something new—a stability ball.



Stability balls are flexible balls that range from 12 to 30 inches in diameter. Using one to support your body, you can do exercises that work the abdominal, back, and hip muscles—what exercise professionals call “core” muscles. Because the ball is unstable and “wiggles” a bit, you have to use your core muscles during each exercise to stay steady on the ball. This improves your balance and posture.

Smaller people should use a smaller ball and larger people a larger one so their weight is adequately supported. The right amount of inflation is important, too. It's easier to do the exercises if the ball is soft rather than firm.

If you choose to use weights in your workout, find ones that will work for you. The handles should feel comfortable and not cause undue muscle fatigue when lifting

them. Try a few exercises with the weights before buying them.

Give It a Go

Below are three exercises from the American Council on Exercise that can be done with a stability ball. **Do not try these without discussing with your doctor first.** Be sure to wear sturdy workout shoes and talk with your doctor before starting or changing an exercise program. If you have breathlessness with exercise or trouble getting started, ask your doctor about pulmonary rehabilitation.

- 1. Triceps extensions.** The triceps muscle runs along the back of the upper arm. It helps you to reach and lift.
 - Sit on the ball with feet flat on the floor and hip distance apart. Hold a dumbbell behind your head with both hands.
 - Tighten your abdominal mus-

cles and pull your shoulder blades together. Exhale and straighten your arms, lifting the dumbbell overhead.

- Inhale and lower the dumbbell behind your head. Use only your forearms. Your upper arms shouldn't move. Repeat.
- 2. Wall squats.** This exercise tones thigh and hip muscles to give you more strength for walking and climbing stairs.
 - Place the ball against the wall and lean against it with your back. Move the ball up or down so that it is in contact with the small of your back, tailbone, and mid-back.
 - Pull your shoulders down and back. Lean into the ball without arching your back. Put your hands on the front of your thighs.
 - Inhale and slowly lower your body, like you're sitting on a chair. Let the ball roll with

you. Keep your knees aligned over your second toe. Stop when your thighs feel tight. If you are able to do this exercise easily, stop when your thighs are parallel to the floor.

- Exhale and slowly straighten your legs. Repeat.
- 3. Stomach crunches.** Toning these core muscles improves posture and balance.
- Sit on the ball with your feet flat on the floor. Lean backward slowly and walk your feet away from the ball. Stop when you feel your shoulders, back, and tailbone contact the ball.
- Clasp your hands behind your head. Squeeze your shoulder blades together. Keep your elbows pulled back.
- Exhale, tighten your abdominal muscles, and slowly curl your chest toward your torso. Keep your chin tucked. When your upper back has lifted off the ball, inhale and slowly uncurl. Repeat.

Exercise Improves Symptoms

Exercise can improve symptoms such as breathlessness and can help you get around more easily. Activities like carrying groceries or climbing steps will be less difficult.

If you are not exercising already, talk with your doctor before you start. Always start out slowly and exercise according to your capacity and your doctor's recommendations. To ensure safe and effective use, take a stability ball class.

Keep your eye on the ball!

Use a stability ball to help tone your muscles a couple of times a week. You may be surprised by how much better you feel.

Don't Sit on the Sidelines! Be Active in Managing Your COPD

It's tough having a chronic health condition. But once you've discovered you have COPD, don't hide your head in the sand. Learn about your lungs and your condition. The more you know, the better you'll be able to take care of yourself.

Ask Questions

It helps to know what your condition is and what you need to do to manage your symptoms. Ask your doctor:

- *What is my diagnosis? What does it mean?*
- *Do I need additional tests?*
- *What are my treatment options?*
- *What's the name of the medication I'll be taking?*
 - *What does the medication do?*
 - *When will it start working?*
 - *What are the side effects?*
- *How can I manage my symptoms at home?*
- *What are the signs of a COPD flare-up?*
- *Should I try pulmonary rehabilitation?*

Clip & Save

Boost Your Lung Health IQ

Take the time to learn how COPD affects your lungs and how it is treated. Knowing the facts will give you the confidence to manage your condition. You can find more information about COPD here:

- American Lung Association website, www.lungusa.org, and Lung Helpline, **800-548-8252**.
- Better Breathers Club support groups. Call your local American Lung Association or **800-548-8252**.
- American Association of Respiratory Care patient website, www.yourlunghealth.org.
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website, www.nhlbi.nih.gov. Type "COPD" in the Search field.

Get more questions to ask your doctor!

Visit the "Build Your Question List" tool at www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer/questionBuilder.aspx.



Abdominal muscles.

These are the muscles located around the belly. Abdominal muscles support the trunk of the body and help with posture. When you exercise, abdominal muscles also help you exhale more quickly.

Chronic health condition.

A chronic health condition is a disease or disability that lasts anywhere from three months to a lifetime. Diabetes, arthritis, and asthma are all examples of chronic health conditions.

Heartburn. Heartburn is a burning feeling in the chest. When you eat, your food passes through a tube called the esophagus. If the muscles at the end of your esophagus don't close tightly, irritating stomach acid can come back up and cause heartburn.

Pneumonia. Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs, often caused by bacteria or a virus. The infection causes the lungs' air sacs to swell. This makes it difficult and painful to breathe. A person with pneumonia may also experience a cough, fever, and chills.



Practice Good Hygiene to Ward Off Germs

Everyone knows the misery of having a cold or the flu—the sneezing, coughing, fever, and body aches. These respiratory infections are no fun for anyone, but they are a special concern for people with COPD. They can make you cough more, produce more phlegm, and feel more breathless. People with COPD are also more likely to get pneumonia.

What can you do to protect yourself? Be sure you're up to date on flu and pneumonia shots. Then work to keep the bugs away by practicing good hygiene.

First Line of Defense: Keep Hands Clean

Washing your hands keeps germs from spreading. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends washing them before, during, and after you prepare food and after you use the bathroom, change a child's diaper, touch garbage, or pet an animal.

Don't be hasty when you wash your hands. Lather up with soap and water and scrub for about 20 seconds—the time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song. Don't forget the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

When soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based sanitizing hand gel. Hand sanitizers don't kill as many germs, but they can help in a pinch. Drugstores carry small containers that are handy for stashing in a purse or briefcase.

Other Germ-Fighting Tactics: Keep Your Distance

Colds and flu spread when a sick person sneezes or coughs, so avoid getting too close to someone who is ill. When you are sick, stay home if you can. Otherwise, take care so that people around you don't catch your illness. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, but not with your hand. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

➤ Take these simple steps and your chances of getting sick will be lower. And that's nothing to sneeze at.

Cooking for One: Make It Healthier

Cooking for one can seem like a lot of work. So when hunger strikes, it is tempting to reach for something easy, like a frozen pizza or a donut. But many processed foods like these contain too little fiber and too much salt, sugar, and saturated fat.

Instead, make simple dishes by combining wholesome basics with healthy convenience items suggested by the American Dietetic Association. Try prewashed salad greens, presliced low-fat cheese, bags of frozen fruits and vegetables, single-serving applesauce, canned low-sodium beans, and boneless chicken breast.

Here are some dishes that will give you great nutrition in minutes without much effort. And the best part? Most require no pots or pans.

Instead of this:	Try this:
Fast-food or frozen breakfast sandwich	Scrambled eggs or egg substitute and whole wheat toast
Donut or pastry	A whole-grain toaster waffle topped with unsweetened applesauce
Frozen cheese pizza	Whole wheat pita bread topped with bottled pizza sauce, prewashed fresh spinach, and a slice of low-fat cheese. Broil in oven until the cheese melts.
Chinese takeout	Quick-cooking brown rice topped with sautéed frozen stir-fry vegetables and diced boneless chicken breast. Season with low-sodium soy sauce.
Fast-food burrito	A warm whole wheat flour tortilla filled with canned black beans (heated on the stove or in a microwave oven), grated cheese, and bottled salsa
Ice cream sundae with hot fudge sauce (a high-fat topping)	Vanilla yogurt topped with thawed frozen mango slices and 2 tablespoons chocolate sauce (a low-fat topping)



Seasoned Salmon for One

Serves 1

Ingredients

- 6 ounces salmon fillet, skin removed
- ½ to 1 teaspoon lemon pepper seasoning (without salt)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

Directions

1. Sprinkle lemon pepper seasoning on both sides of salmon, pressing in lightly.
2. In a small frying pan, heat olive oil until almost hot. Put fish in pan. Cook on medium-high heat about four minutes per side. Fish should be browned on the outside and moist inside.
3. Serve with either:
 - 1 cup cooked chopped spinach with 1 tablespoon low-fat sour cream
 - ½ cup of cooked instant brown rice, with ½ teaspoon of butter

This Complete Meal Provides

Calories 442, Protein 38 g, Fat 18 g, Carbohydrates 33 g, Fiber 7 g, Sodium 262 mg

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