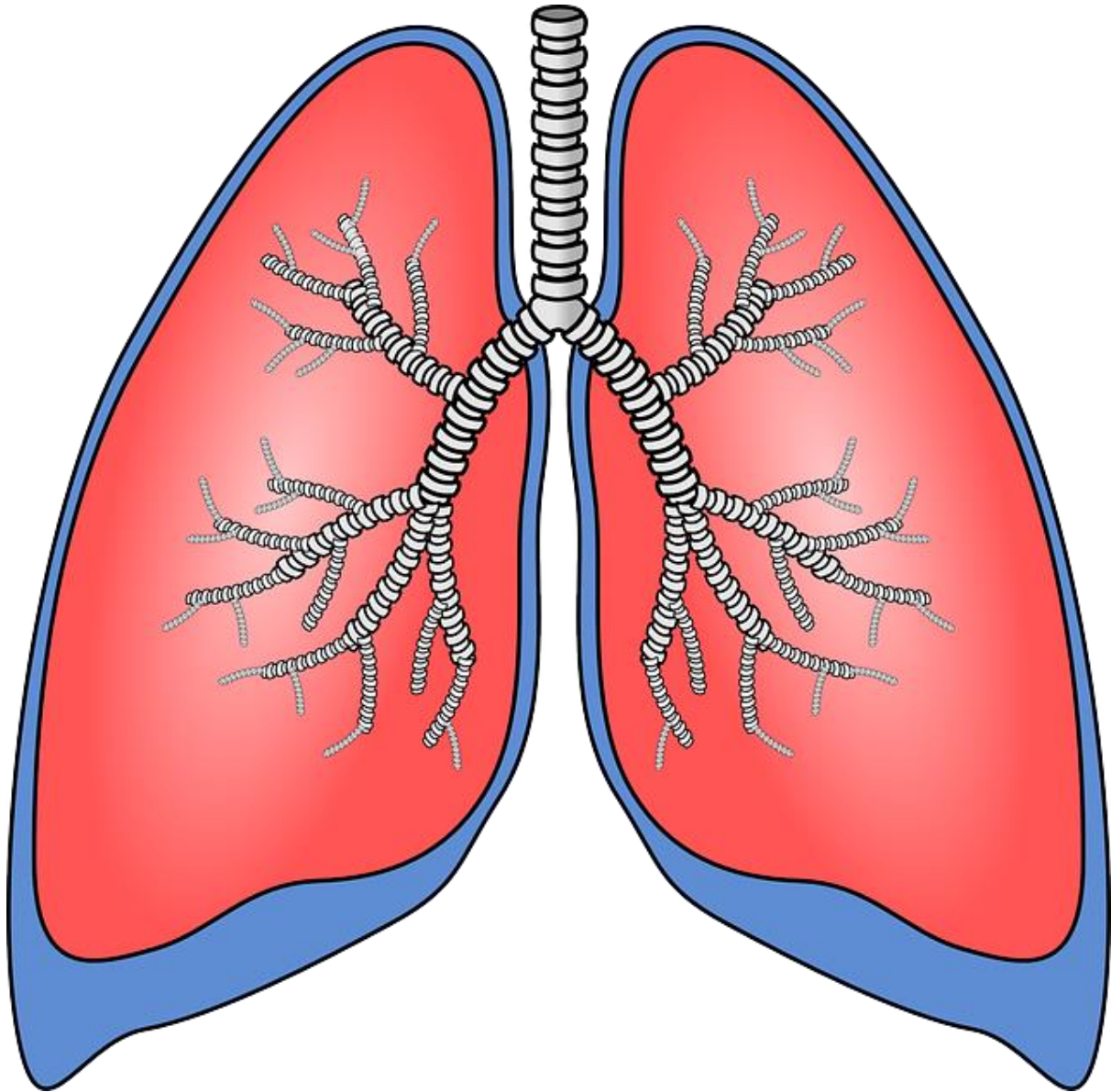


SAFFRON HEALTH

BREATHING PROPERLY- WHY IT IS IMPORTANT AND TIPS ON HOW TO DO



Breathing

Breathing is one of the most important and vital act we do. Our breathing alters in pattern and rhythm at different times of the day and in different emotional states.

Breathing is one of the few bodily processes that can take place automatically without thinking about it or we can alter it consciously and at will

Types of breathing

There are two main types of breathing:

- *Chest breathing*
- *Abdominal (or diaphragmatic) breathing*

Chest Breathing

This type of breathing is characterised by an outward movement of the chest and is found most commonly during vigorous exercise, or emergency situations

If we constantly use chest breathing, it can make the body tense, as if under stress. This is because the activated upper chest muscles increase feelings of anxiety

Abdominal (or diaphragmatic) breathing

*The diaphragm is a dome-shaped muscle, which separates our chest and abdomen. When we breathe **in** the diaphragm, tightens, flattens and moves down, sucking air into the lungs. As the diaphragm moves down, it pushes the abdominal contents down, which forces the*

*abdominal wall **out**. When we breathe out the diaphragm relaxes, air passes out of the lungs and the abdominal wall flattens. This type of breathing has two important effects on the body:*

- A. It is relaxing compared to the 'emergency mode' breathing of the upper chest, which forms part of the 'fight or flight' response to stressful situations*
- B. It is typical of the regenerating processes that occurs when the body is at peace and can be seen in the way babies and children breathe*

Abdominal breathing is the most efficient and relaxed way of getting enough air into your lungs.

Breathing too quickly, too deeply or irregularly can result in unpleasant symptoms such as dizziness, faintness and tingling etc. This type of breathing can commonly become a cause of anxiety

Basic Diaphragm Breathing Exercise

- 1. Sit in a comfortable position or lie flat on the floor, your bed, or another comfortable, flat surface*
- 2. Relax your shoulders*
- 3. Put a hand on your chest and a hand on your stomach*
- 4. Breathe in through your nose for about 2 seconds. You should experience the air moving through your nostrils into your abdomen, making your stomach expand. During this type of breathing, make sure your stomach is moving outward while your chest remains relatively still*
- 5. Purse your lips (as if you're about to drink through a straw), press gently on your stomach and exhale slowly for about 2 seconds*
- 6. Repeat these steps several times for best results*

Rib-stretch Breathing Exercise

This is another helpful deep breathing exercise

- 1. Stand up straight and arch your back*
- 2. Breathe out until you can't anymore*
- 3. Inhale slowly and gradually taking in as much air as possible until you can't breathe in anymore*
- 4. Hold your breath for about 10 seconds*
- 5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth. You can do this normally or with pursed lips*

Numbered Breathing

This is a good exercise for gaining control over your breathing patterns. Here's how you can do it:

- 1. Stand up, stay still and close your eyes*
- 2. Inhale deeply until you can't take in anymore air*
- 3. Exhale until all air has been emptied from your lungs*
- 4. Keep your eyes close. Inhale again while picturing the number 1*
- 5. Keep the air in your lungs for a few seconds, and then let it all out.*
- 6. Inhale again while picturing the number 2*
- 7. Hold your breath while counting silently to 3, then let it all out again*
- 8. Repeat these steps until you've reached 8. Feel free to count higher if you feel comfortable*