

**DO YOU/CAN YOU
DO THIS?**

**SHORT WELLNESS SELF-
CHECKS**

How do you breathe when exercising?

Breathing During Running

There have been studies which have found certain ways of breathing that are less energetically costly and more comfortable for runners. The results showed that runners have a tendency to breathe in a 2:1 or 3:2 pattern most often, meaning inhaling for 2 steps and exhaling for 1 (2:1) or inhaling for 3 steps and exhaling for 2 (3:2). Therefore, by slowly breathing in a 3:2 or 2:1 pattern in sync to your footfalls when you run, you have the potential to run more smoothly and for a longer period of time before fatiguing by maximizing oxygen uptake. (See Study)

Examples of Breathing Patterns

2:1	3:2
left foot strike – inhale	left foot strike - inhale
right foot strike – inhale	right foot strike - inhale
left foot strike – exhale	left foot strike – inhale
	right foot strike – exhale
	left foot strike – exhale

Bottomline: Try to breath mindfully, deeply, steadily, and through your nose when you are exercising. On heavy exertion try to expire versus breath holding unless you are an athlete doing a maximal effort. Different forms of exercise have different oxygen and breathing requirements. To that point I would suggest to find what works best for you, but to breath. I would further that to be mindful of your breathing to make sure that you are not breathing shallow and that it is steady. It is also a good idea to breath through your nose and out the mouth when exercising when you can. See previous Self-Check. Some running coaches suggests breathing in once through the nose and exhaling twice through the mouth (in-out-out) while running. I agree when you can to breathe through the nose. There are many additional benefits from breathing through the nose at all times. See previous Self-Check and see sidebar for running breathing techniques. When doing strength and muscle building exercises the general rule is to exhale when doing the harder motion (working against gravity, lifting a weight up, pulling up) and inhaling when doing the easier motion (working with gravity, lowering a weight or your body). I agree if the exercise is difficult, but if you are doing something moderate to somewhat difficult try to breathe normally. If you find yourself grunting or pausing in breath, it might be an indication that you've jumped too high in weight. Lower the weight to where you can breathe. If you are going to lift maximum weights ask why? If you have a good reason, like being an athlete, then you might want to try breathing out forcefully on exertion versus performing a Valsalva Maneuver (See previous Self-Check) or try Okinawa Breathing (see article).

Self-checks: Solving problems before they happen.