Did you know you can improve your health and fitness simply by learning to breathe correctly? Breathing correctly will optimize oxygenation to your muscles and internal organs, and help you:

- Lower your blood pressure
- Reduce stress and anxiety by lowering the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol, and releasing mood-boosting hormones like serotonin
- Balance your sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems
- Improve athletic performance
- Improve mental focus and boost brain health

While you may think there’s nothing anyone can teach you about breathing—after all, you do it all day long, without giving it a second thought—chances are you may be breathing incorrectly without even realizing it.

Most people overbreathe—in other words, they chronically hyperventilate—and during exercise this can have a number of adverse consequences. Mouth breathing is another common mistake, especially during more vigorous exercise.

Mouth and nose breathing differ dramatically in terms of the depth of your breath, how the air is “prepared,” and the physical effects they produce.

For example, during exercise, breathing through your nose will help you optimize performance, endurance, post-exercise energy levels, and even your ability to metabolize fat.

So the first step to attaining optimal breathing is to breathe through your nose, not through your mouth, and this applies both in and outside of the gym.
## Signs of Inefficient Breathing

How do you know if you’re breathing incorrectly? As noted by Patrick McKeown, one of the leading teachers of the Buteyko Breathing Method, there are a number of signs or symptoms that can alert you to the fact that you’re not breathing as efficiently as you could. This includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mouth breathing</th>
<th>Upper chest breathing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frequent sighing</td>
<td>Noticeable breathing during rest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking large breaths prior to talking</td>
<td>Erratic breathing</td>
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| Chronic rhinitis (nasal congestion and runny nose) | Sleep apnea |

The detrimental effects of incorrect breathing, such as mouth breathing and over-breathing, are well-documented. Up to 50 peer-reviewed papers on the importance of breathing through your nose can be found on the Buteyko Clinic’s website.

## The Importance of Nose Breathing

The Buteyko Method teaches you how to bring your breathing volume back toward normal or, in other words, to reverse what’s called chronic hyperventilation or chronic over-breathing.

One of the most important aspects of proper breathing is breathing through your nose. Part of the benefits of nose breathing is related to the fact that there is nitric oxide in your nose, and when you breathe through your nose, you carry a small amount of this beneficial gas into your lungs.

Nitric oxide not only helps maintain homeostasis, or balance, within your body, it’s also a bronchodilator and vasodilator, and has antibacterial properties that helps neutralize germs and bacteria.

Nose breathing also helps normalize your breath volume. This is important because when you chronically over-breathe, the heavier breathing volume that’s coming into your lungs can cause a disturbance of blood gasses, including the loss of carbon dioxide (CO2).
The Hazards of Over-breathing

Contrary to popular belief, carbon dioxide is not merely a waste gas. Although you breathe to get rid of excess CO2, it’s very important that your breathing volume is normal, in order to maintain a certain level of CO2 in your bloodstream.

As explained by Buteyko, if you’re breathing too heavily you lose carbon dioxide, which causes the smooth muscles around your airways to constrict. This creates a negative feedback loop that can lead to chronic hyperventilating and, potentially, exercise-induced asthma.

While you might believe that taking deeper breaths through your mouth allows you to take more oxygen into your body, which should make you feel better, the opposite actually happens.

You can test this out by taking five or six big breaths in and out of your mouth. Most people will begin to experience some light-headedness or dizziness.

This occurs because you’re eliminating too much carbon dioxide from your bloodstream, which causes your blood vessels to constrict—hence the light-headedness. So, the heavier you breathe, the less oxygen that’s actually delivered throughout your body due to lack of carbon dioxide, which causes your blood vessels to constrict.

The loss of carbon dioxide caused by heavy breathing also reduces blood flow to your heart, which in some unfortunate cases could lead to cardiac arrest or heart attack.

Learn Diaphragmatic Breathing to Combat Stress

There are some important benefits to regularly practicing diaphragmatic breathing. You can do it to replace a workout when you’re overly stressed... or you can do it at the end of your workout...

Here’s how to do it: Pick a comfortable place to lie down on your back and bend your knees slightly so your feet are flat on the ground. Then close your eyes, think about your favorite vacation, and just breathe for the next 5 minutes or more. If you are breathing correctly you should notice that when you inhale your abdomen should rise (most people the opposite occurs). When you exhale your abdomen should sink.

You’ll be surprised by not only how good you feel after you’ve done it, but by how well you’ll sleep that night and how recovered you’ll feel for your next workout. Sure, diaphragmatic breathing may not be ‘killer,’ but it might just be what you need to end a killer day.”

Again, while doing this, be sure to breathe through your nose. Nose breathing has the automatic side effect of helping you breathe more lightly, which can not only help
reverse rhinitis and chronic nasal congestion, which often results from mouth breathing, but also helps reduce anxiety and panic.

Remember, the deeper and more quickly you breathe, the more constricted your blood vessels will be, which means less oxygen will be delivered to your tissues—including your heart and brain.

**Remember to**

1. Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat
2. Obtain adequate amounts of protein
3. Work on Flexibility
4. Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multi-vitamin

Let me know if I can help. Email me at architechsports@gmail.com

God Bless,

Alan Tyson

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