

Every Breath You Take: The Buteyko Revolution

Did you know 90 percent of the general population in the West over-breathe? They suffer from some degree of chronic "hidden" hyperventilation. Hidden hyperventilation has been shown to be associated with over a hundred complaints from simple fatigue to hypertension and asthma.

You can check your own breathing. Sit comfortably, making sure you are breathing quietly and normally for a minute through your nose. Keep your mouth closed. On an out-breath, lightly nip your nose and hold your breath until you feel you want to breathe again. Then, release your nose and ensure you return to your normal depth and rhythm of breathing immediately afterwards. You should not need to take a large in-breath or deeper breath. If you do, you have held your breath too long. You are trying to establish what is called the Control Pause, how long you can *comfortably* hold your breath after a normal out-breath.

Check below to see how good your breathing is:

<u>Control Pause</u>	<u>% CO₂ in alveoli</u>	<u>Breathing Rate</u>
45 - 60 seconds	6.0 - 6.5	Normal for one person
35 - 45	5.5 - 6.0	Breathing for 1- 2 persons
25 - 35	4.5 - 5.5	Breathing for 2 persons
15 - 25	4.3 - 4.5	Breathing for 3-4 persons
10 - 15	4.0 - 4.3	Breathing for 4-5 persons
5 - 10	3.5 - 4.0	Breathing for 5 plus

To improve your breathing, you will need to learn to breathe less so that your Control Pause is under 45 seconds. Here are some simple exercises you can try. If you get any dizziness or feel unwell in any way, stop them and consult a Buteyko teacher.

1. Make sure you always breathe through your nose: your mouth is for eating and speaking, your nose is for breathing.
2. Practice periods of 5 to 10 minutes of reduced breathing, try to relax totally and get the feeling of slight air hunger (not starvation). This requires a lot of practice for some people to get it right.
3. After 2 above, check your pulse before and after a Control Pause. If the Control Pause is up and the pulse is down or unchanged, you are breathing less. If the Control Pause is down or pulse goes up, you need more practice.
4. If you snore at night or breathe through the mouth, try taping your lips gently together with micropore tape, not to seal them completely but just to act as a reminder to keep the mouth closed.
5. Try to avoid sighing and yawning.

Check your progress over the next few weeks. With perseverance, you should get up to Control Pause of 45 seconds. If not, book in for a full Buteyko course. You can find a practitioner on the website www.buteykokent.co.uk

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