HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY

281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
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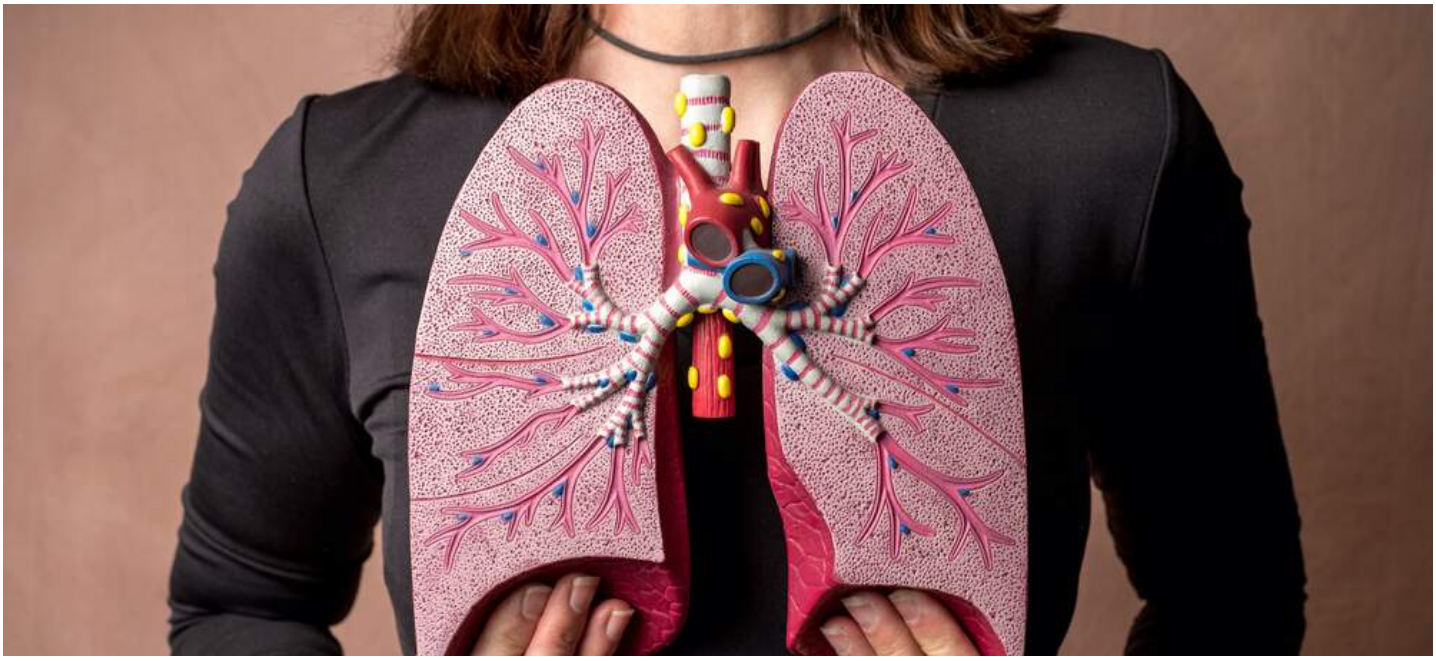
HOW TO INCREASE YOUR LUNG CAPACITY

IN THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ASKING US HOW TO HAVE OPTIMAL LUNG HEALTH AND WHAT THEY CAN DO TO THEIR IMPROVE LUNG FUNCTION AND CAPACITY.



Welcome to Part two of exercises to help increase lung function and capacity.

We have put together 2 pdfs of specific exercises and activities that can also help improve lung capacity. Part one covered some of the breathing exercises to help with lung capacity and this pfd will explain some of the chest and thoracic mobilising exercises you can try.If you are experiencing any breathing difficulties, please speak to your Dr before trying these

WHY LUNG CAPACITY DECREASES

As you age, natural changes affect your lung tissue, muscles and bones. Muscles like the diaphragm can get weaker. Lung tissue that helps keep your airways open can lose elasticity, which means your airways can get a little smaller. Also your rib cage bones can change, and joints become stiffened which leaves less room and mobility for your lungs to expand.

Although a decrease in lung function is a normal part of the aging process, there are steps you can take to stay as healthy as possible, improve capacity, improve breathing technique and improve rib cage mobility.

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WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO

CHEST MOBILIZATION, EXERCISES AND STRETCHING EXERCISES

Studies have reported that chest mobilisation, thoracic exercises and stretching have been shown to increase thoracic mobility, chest expansion, and lung capacity.

There are also manual techniques that require application by a physiotherapist and you can speak to our Physios about these to help with chest, rib and thoracic spine movement.

Basic Rib Stretch

The rib stretch does exactly what it says, stretching or expanding the ribs, which helps your lungs take in as much air as possible. Standing upright with your hands on your hips. Slowly inhale air until your lungs fill to capacity. Hold your breath for 20 seconds or for however long is comfortable and then exhale slowly. At the end of the exhale give a little push into your ribs to help them spring back as you inhale. Relax and then repeat three more times.
When done on a regular basis, rib stretches help you take more air into your lungs and exhale fully so stale air doesn't build up in the lungs.

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Thoracic Mobility Exercises

There are numerous exercises designed to improve thoracic mobility and can be age specific- for example a younger person can utilise a foam roller or tennis ball for stretching but this would not be suitable for an older osteoporotic person.

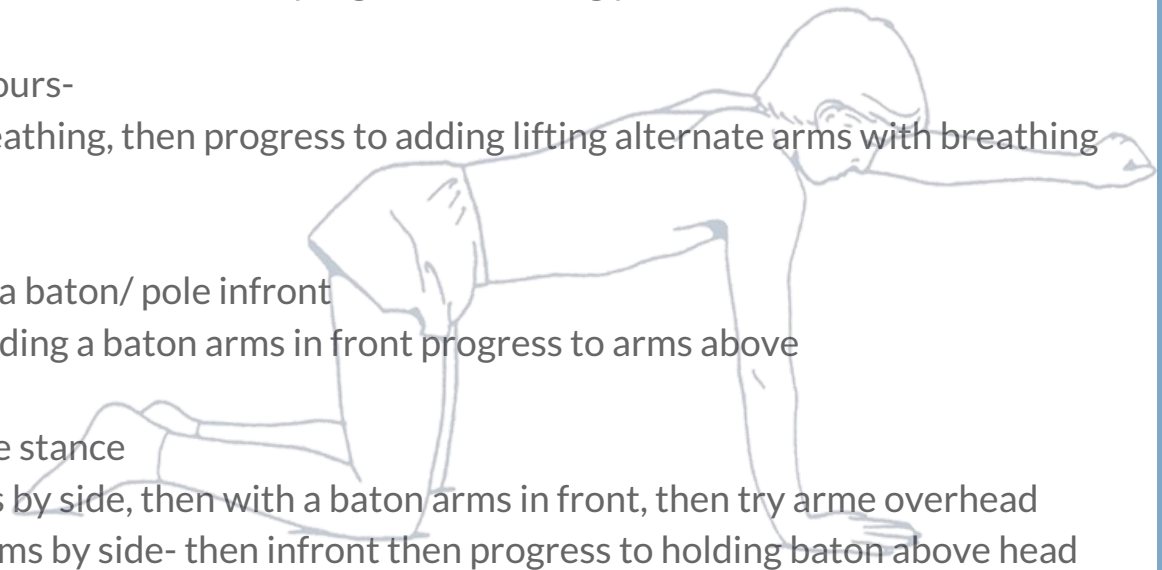
Please speak with our Physios for the best exercises suitable to your health and age.

Here are some basic ones to start in different positions
Start with 5 of each and increase to 10 when comfortable.

Lying on your back- knees bent-
Abdominal crunches, just lifting shoulder blades off ground on exhale
Oblique crunches on exhale , aiming shoulder to opp knee

Sitting
Rotating torso each direction arms crossed- progress to doing holding a baton or small pole in front with arms outstretched.
Bending sideways with arms infront, progress to holding pole/baton overhead

Cat Position– all fours-
Diaphragmatic breathing, then progress to adding lifting alternate arms with breathing



Upright Kneeling
Rotate torso with a baton/ pole infront
Bend sideways holding a baton arms in front progress to arms above

Standing with wide stance
Rotate torso- arms by side, then with a baton arms in front, then try arme overhead
Bend sideways , arms by side- then infront then progress to holding baton above head

The above exercises are aimed to be mobilising without being too physically challenging.
Use controlled breathing through out

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Specific Physio Chest Exercises

These are exercises that utilize active moments of the torso and the extremities with over pressure and deep breathing . These are a little more difficult and specific.

1.To mobilize the upper part of the chest and stretch the pectorals:
Sit on a chair with hands entwined behind the head; Let the arms be pulled horizontally, so that pectoralis muscles are elongated, and inhale deeply.

2.To mobilize the upper chest and shoulders:
Seated on a chair extend both arms overhead to 180 degrees bilaterally, during inhalation. After this bend forward at the hips and try to touch the floor during exhalation.

3. To mobilize one side of the chest:
Seated on the chair lean away from one side to increase the stiffness and expand that area of the chest during inhalation. Gently push your fist into the lateral area of the other chest, while bending away and breathe in and out.
Progress by raising the arm, near the tight side of the chest, over the head while bending away.This will stretch the stiff tissues of the chest more , and allow that area to expand better. Repeat on the other side

4. To increase expiration or exhaling through deep breathing:
Lying with flexed hips and knees and breathe in. Then pull both the knees to the chest area, one at a time, while breathing out. This pushes the abdominal area into the diaphragm and results in better expiration.

Some Other Stretches

Mid Thoracic stretch

Kneeling position- sit back on to heels
Outstretch arms and reach forward,
Inhale and exhale

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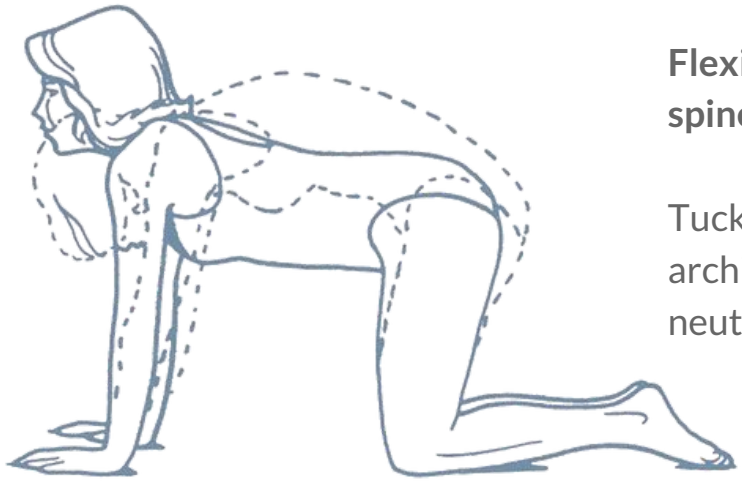
Mid Thoracic rotation stretch

Assume position as above and reach to each side as far as you can, keeping chest low to floor as possible



Flexion/ extension of Thoracic spine

Tuck chin in and tighten stomach- arching back, then relax slowly into neutral position

Rotation and extension of Thoracic spine

Side lying with knees bent and arms outstretched. Leave one arm on bed and lift upper arm up and back as far as comfortable, opening the chest

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Additional Activities to Improve Lung Capacity

Laughing and Singing

Any activity that works the abdominal muscles also works the lungs. Both laughing and singing do just that. Laughing not only increases your lung capacity but also forces stale air out of the lungs so more fresh air can enter. Likewise, singing works the diaphragm muscle, which also helps increase lung capacity.

Stop Smoking

Limit exposure to inhaling pollutants

Keep Hydrated

REMEMBER: Before starting any exercise program, including a lung exercise one, it is best to talk to a doctor to ensure there are not any restrictions or individual recommendations for best results. If a person has symptoms of poor lung health, such as shortness of breath during daily activities, pain when breathing, or a cough that will not go away, they should see their doctor.

The earlier lung problems receive a diagnosis and treatment, the better the treatment outcome is likely to be.We hope that this has answered many of the questions we have been asked about improving lung capacity.

Important at any time but particularly prior to Winter and Flu season. If you are aware of stiffness through your ribs, chest and thoracic spine speak with our physios about some treatment sessions to improve mobility so you can make the most out of your home exercises.

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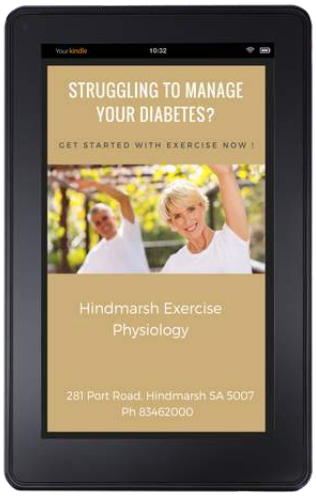
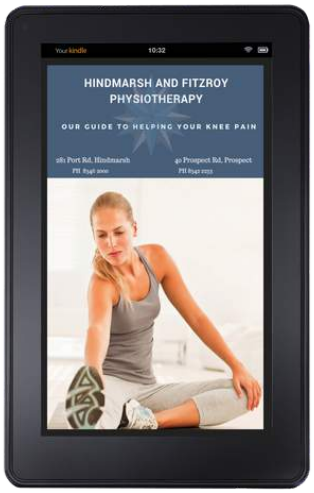
We just want to say thank you to all of our clients for your understanding during this uncertain time and we are committed to supporting you and your physiotherapy needs. Please reach out to our team if there is anything we can do. We are here and providing therapy In Clinic, at Home and Online.

As Physios, we provide extensive education as part of our management and prevention programs, but realize not everyone can find the time or have the confidence to make an appointment. You are welcome to download these informative E-books that you may find useful to get you on your way.

OTHER RESOURCES





EXERCISING FOR DIABETES

MANAGING BACK PAIN

MANAGING KNEE PAIN

To access our free E-book Resource just click the images above

You can call us on 83462000 at Hindmarsh and 83422233 for Fitzroy, Prospect or CONTACT US ONLINE HERE if you would like an appointment

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