HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY

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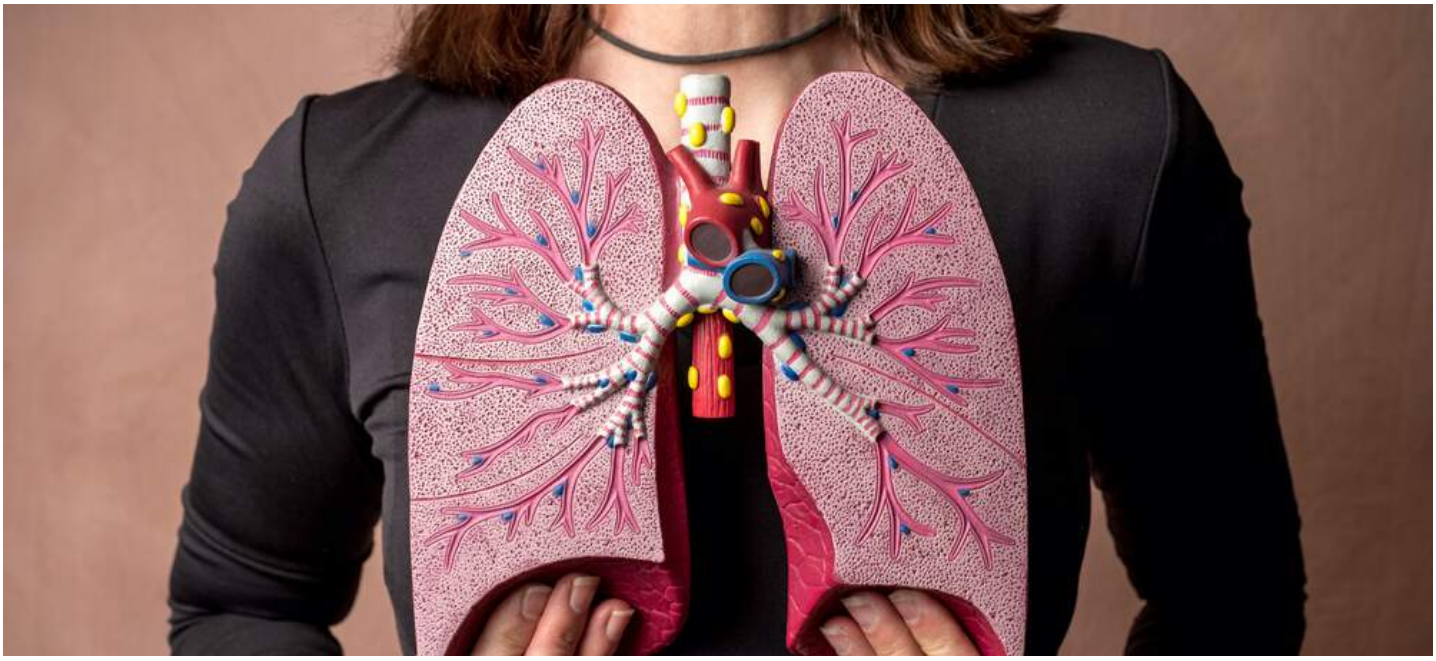
HOW TO INCREASE YOUR LUNG CAPACITY

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.



The maximum amount of air your lungs can hold—your total lung capacity—is about 6 liters. That is about three large soft drink bottles.Your lungs mature by the time you are about 20-25 years old. After about the age of 35, it is normal for your lung function to decline gradually as you age. This can make breathing slightly more difficult as you get older or if you have previous respiratory illnesses. For those affected by COVID-19 there is growing evidence that they can be left with substantially weakened lung capacity.

WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN

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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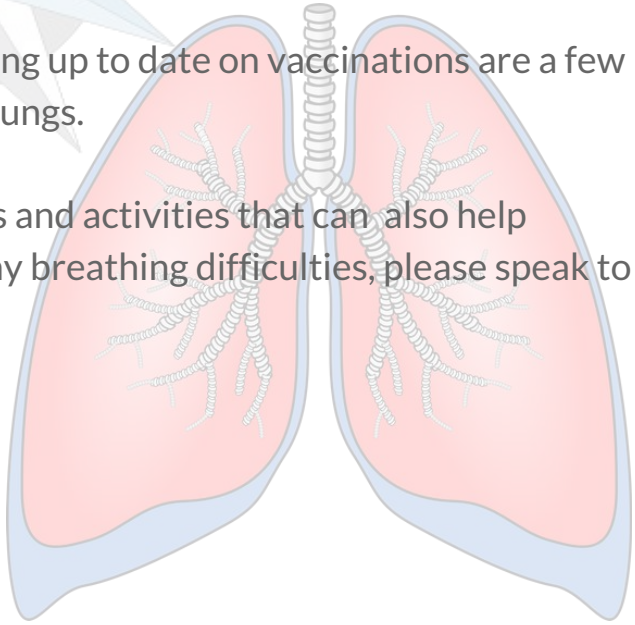
WHAT CAN YOU DO



Staying active, avoiding tobacco smoke and staying up to date on vaccinations are a few ways you can protect and even strengthen your lungs.

We have put together 2 pdfs of specific exercises and activities that can also help improve lung capacity. If you are experiencing any breathing difficulties, please speak to your Dr before trying these

Welcome to Part one

BREATHING EXERCISES

Pursed Lip Breathing

Sit up straight. Practicing good posture can help promote better lung movement.
Breathe in deeply through your nose in a slow, controlled fashion. Purse your lips.
Breathe out through your pursed lips, making a goal of breathing out twice as long as breathing in. Some people may find it beneficial to set a timer, such as focusing on breathing in for 5 seconds and exhaling for 10 seconds.
This exercise can be helpful for someone who is not as physically active as some others and may not be using their breathing muscles as frequently.
Those with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Airways Disease)can also benefit from performing this exercise.

Belly or Diapragmatic Breathing

Belly breathing is an exercise that focuses on targeting and strengthening the diaphragm muscle that allows a person to take a deep breath. Rest your hand or another lightweight object on your stomach.
Breathe in slowly through your nose to note how your stomach rises and falls when breathing. Breathe out through your mouth.Breathe in through your nose again, this time trying to get your stomach to go up more than it did with the previous breath.
Try to exhale for a much longer time than when you inhale, such as two to three times as long.
You can practice belly breathing and pursed lip breathing for about 5 to 10 minutes every day to enhance lung function.

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Alternate Nostril Breathing

This is a type of yoga exercise that aims to increase your lung capacity.This type of breathing is relaxed and is used to help relieve nervous system tension and help induce sleep and it can be done both seated and while lying down.
To do this, start by releasing all of the air out of your lungs. Use a finger to block one nostril, and inhale through the other. Inhale into your stomach until you are full of breath. Then, seal your open nostril with another finger and hold the air in your lungs for a moment.Release the finger that is on one nostril, and exhale all of the breath out that you can.
Then take a pause and inhale again through the same nostril. Seal both nostrils again.If this is the first time you are trying this exercise, breathe in for four counts, hold your breath for up to eight counts, then exhale for four counts.
Do this up to 10 times, and pay attention to how your body begins to relax.

Count Your Breaths

You can also increase the length of your inhalations and exhalations. Start by counting how long a natural breath takes. If it takes to the count of five to inhale it should take to the count of five to exhale. You'll want them to be of equal length.
Once you've discovered the count for your average breath, add one more count to each inhale and exhale until you can comfortably extend the length of time it takes to fill and empty your lungs.
The point is to avoid straining or being uncomfortable. It should be a gradual and easy process..

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GENERAL EXERCISE

Stay Active

Regular moderately intense activity is great for the lungs, and when you increase your daily activity you get three things done at once: healthy lungs, a healthier heart and a better mood.
Aim for at least least 20 minutes of consistent, moderately intense movement daily, like a brisk walk or bike ride.

Interval Training

For people who have problems with breathlessness and shortness of breath while exercising, interval training may be a better solution than steady-state exercise.Interval training involves alternating a more challenging exercise with a slower recovery period. Examples include walking at a very fast pace for 1 minute, then walking more slowly for 2 minutes.

Similarly, a person may perform a weightlifting activity for 1 minute, such as bicep curls or lunges, then step to the side or walk at a gentle pace for 2 to 3 minutes.Interval training allows the lungs time to recover before challenging them again.

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Exercise At Altitude

Athletes have been using this technique for many years. There is less oxygen available at high altitudes, which makes your lung capacity increase if you exercise. It is important to start slowly because it is difficult to exercise at higher elevations. Allow your body at least two weeks to get used to the altitude.

THORACIC AND CHEST MOBILITY 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.

We will cover these in the second of our two part series on improving Lung capacity

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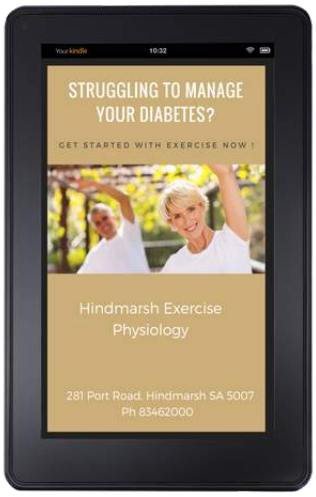
We just want to say thank you to all of our clients for your understanding during this uncertain time and we are committed to supporting you and your physiotherapy needs. Please reach out to our team if there is anything we can do. We are here and providing therapy In Clinic, at Home and Online.

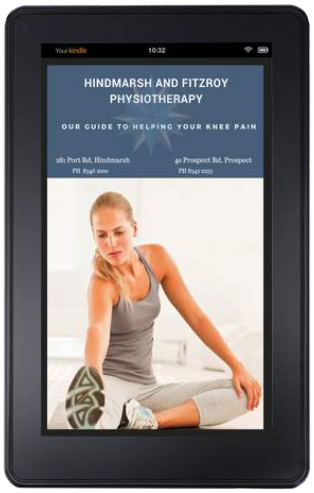
As Physios, we provide extensive education as part of our management and prevention programs, but realize not everyone can find the time or have the confidence to make an appointment. You are welcome to download these informative E-books that you may find useful to get you on your way.

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

We are passionate about providing our patients and community with information on prevention and management of many conditions. This PDF is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment and should not be interpreted as such. Always seek advice from a qualified medical professional and use of this information is at your own risk