

# The Buteyko Breathing Technique

This is a programme of breathing re-training that was devised by a Russian doctor, Professor Konstantin Buteyko, during the 1950s.

## ***What is The Buteyko Breathing Technique?***

It is a series of breathing exercises to control the rate (speed) of your breathing and the volume (the size) of each breath. There are other simple exercises to learn, in addition to the breathing exercises. The exercises are very specific and need to be practised carefully and frequently, usually for several days or weeks, until they become automatic, in order to be effective.

## ***Will The Buteyko Breathing Technique help me?***

The Buteyko Breathing Technique has been shown to help people with asthma to control symptoms, such as wheezing, coughing, breathlessness or a blocked nose. It is not, and should not be used as, an alternative to medication (including inhalers) for asthma, and is not a treatment for a severe asthma attack. Research does show however, that it may be possible to reduce daily medication use if the exercises are followed as taught, but this should not be done without consulting your GP or other respiratory specialist.

The Buteyko Breathing Technique is claimed also to be helpful for people with other problems. These include hyperventilation (over-breathing), panic attacks, hay fever, rhinitis, COPD, snoring and sinusitis. However, as yet, there is no research evidence to support these other claims.

## ***Are there simpler breathing exercises that would help me?***

The breathing exercises of the Buteyko Breathing Technique are very similar to Reduced-Breathing Exercises (see leaflet GL-0), which are much simpler. These have been shown also to be helpful for people with asthma and for people with hyperventilation syndrome (also known as disordered or dysfunctional breathing).

## ***How do I do The Buteyko Breathing Technique?***

Because there are a many exercises to learn, it is not possible to describe the Buteyko Breathing Technique exercises in a simple leaflet. It is best to be taught by an experienced Buteyko teacher. Retraining your breathing takes time and you may need several visits to the Buteyko teacher.

## ***Where can I get more information or find a Buteyko teacher?***

Ask your physiotherapist, as some are trained Buteyko teachers, or they may know of one local to you. If not, contact the Buteyko Breathing Association, details overleaf. ►

## Useful contacts

Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Respiratory Care  
[www.acprc.org.uk](http://www.acprc.org.uk)

British Thoracic Society  
[www.brit-thoracic.org.uk](http://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk)

British Lung Foundation  
[www.lunguk.org](http://www.lunguk.org)

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy  
[www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)  
Asthma UK  
[www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)

Buteyko Breathing Association  
[www.buteykobreathing.org](http://www.buteykobreathing.org)

Physiotherapy for Hyperventilation  
[www.physiohypervent.org](http://www.physiohypervent.org)

