

Aire-Force Pulmonary Rehab Support Group Newsletter Spring/Summer 2024

****EXTRA!! EXTRA!! READ ALL ABOUT IT!!****

“Big 3 pharmaceutical companies (Boehringer Ingelheim, AstraZenica, GlaxoSmithKline) have agreed to cap INHALER out-of-pocket costs to \$35 in the U.S.”

In January, the HELP Senate Committee sent letters to four big drug companies. The committee expressed concerns regarding the higher costs of inhalers in the U.S. along with the price differences (lower) in other countries. This is a concern especially for those who don't have pharmacy coverage or have enough insurance to cover the costs of inhalers that are an absolute need.

On March 7th, 2024, **Boehringer Ingelheim** (makers of Atrovent, Combivent, Spiriva etc. for COPD & Asthma) announced that it would begin limiting out-of-pocket costs for its inhalers for eligible patients. This program will start on June 1, 2024, at retail pharmacies. Their full statement & list of inhalers is on their website: <https://www.boehringer-ingelheim.com/us> .

Then on Monday March 18, 2024, **AstraZeneca**(Symbicort, Breztri) (<https://www.astrazeneca-us.com>) followed suit, issuing a similar statement as well as with **GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)**(Ventolin, Advair, Anoro, Trelegy)(<https://us.gsk.com>)issuing theirs on March 20,2024.

Because of government restrictions, people who use federal government insurance programs, like Medicare, may not get help with co-payments. However, the company will offer free products & assistance programs.

To help lower the cost of prescriptions, the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services recommend the following 5 strategies:

- 1) Consider generic options for inhalers or other lower-cost options.
- 2) Research insurance medication plans that provide effective prescription coverage.
 - a. Added coverage may help with the cost of medications during the Medicare Part D gap known as the “donut hole”. Check with your healthcare provider.
- 3) Look into Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs
 - a. Some pharmaceutical companies offer programs to help make their meds more affordable for people enrolled in Medicare Part D. [Find a Pharmaceutical Assistance Program for the drugs you take \(medicare.gov\)](#)
- 4) See if your state offers Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs.
 - a. Many states offer programs to help with medication costs. [Provider Information | mydss.mo.gov](#)
- 5) See if you qualify for the Medicare Part D Extra Help program.
 - a. The “Extra Help” Program helps people enrolled in Medicare Part D with a reduced income. Members can apply anytime and benefit from a lower medication cost. [Apply for Medicare Part D Extra Help program | SSA](#)

Other medication saving programs are:

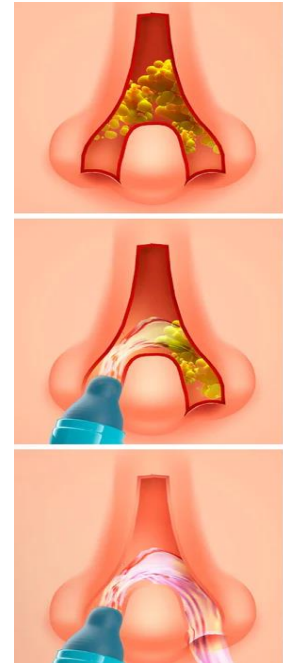
- (1) GoodRX: to get a card go to www.goodrx.com
- (2) Cost Plus Drugs: online pharmacy offering meds at a lower cost than most retailers.
- (3) Amazon's RxPass: subscription of \$5.00 per month to get free shipping on generic meds.

It's Allergy Season!!! Netty pot/ Nasal Flush

A nasal wash/flush is a way to clean the nasal passages and sinus cavities of resident germs, pollen, or fungi. This simple yet beneficial procedure can be performed by/on most anyone. It can be used anytime the sinuses feel irritated, dry, or full of mucus, but especially during allergy season. Most of the units provide instructions for use but you can also refer to Wiki-How for additional information. Finally, remember to clean the nasal wash equipment after each use because it will contain the germs/pollen that were just flushed away and left unclean, it may cause re-infection or re-introduction of pollen/germs. Also, make sure the unit dries out completely before storing it in a box or container. Keep in mind, this unit goes into your nose!!

Benefits:

- Reduces allergies by removing allergenic particles
- Removes bacteria and viruses
- Removes excess mucus from the nasal passages
- Reduces swelling and increases airflow
- Reduces dryness and irritation



The Breather Respiratory Muscle Trainer Device. Designed to enhance lung strength and promote respiratory health. The Breather RMT lets you customize the settings with its independent inhalation and exhalation controls. It is suitable for individuals of all ages, from children to seniors. Whether looking to improve your breathing capacity or maintain respiratory health, this trainer is the perfect companion for your journey. It has a user-friendly training plan, and informative videos to help you achieve your desired results.

Highlights

- Enhance lung strength and health
- Customize inhalation and exhalation control
- Suitable for all ages
- Improve breathing capacity
- Maintain respiratory health
- Free mobile app available
- Informative videos for guidance
- User-friendly training plan



Oxygen Cannulas, Tubing, & Accessories: Multi-color cannulas. Cannula prong cover.



Upcoming Holidays

May 27th Memorial Day

July 4th Independence Day

Sept. 2nd Labor Day

Gym is CLOSED

Independence Day Thursday July 4th

Labor Day, Monday September 2nd.

PULMONARY REHAB SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

*Next meeting: MAY 1ST

*RSVP BY: APR 29TH

1. To receive a copy of the **NEWSLETTER** in your **email**, let us know your email address so we can add you to the list of recipients.
2. If you be interested in attending support group, contact:

Shari or Sue @ 314-205-6849

pulmonaryrehab@stlukes-stl.com

APP's & Websites

- ❖ **A.W.A.K.E:** sleep disorders.
<https://www.sleephealth.org/>
- ❖ **COPD Foundation** website for more information
www.copdfoundation.org
- ❖ **Nicotine Anonymous** (St. Luke's Hospital chapter)
Dotty Duba: (636) 394-2521
- ❖ **Pulmonary Paper:** www.pulmonarypaper.org
- ❖ **Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation** (PFF):
www.PulmonaryFibrosis.org
- ❖ Call our **free Lung Help Line** at 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit Lung.org/helpline to talk with a medical professional.
- ❖ **Pulmonary Rehab Aire-Force Newsletter:** [Aire-Force Pulmonary Rehab \(stlukes-stl.com\)](http://Aire-ForcePulmonaryRehab(stlukes-stl.com))
"https://www.stlukesstl.com/services/pulmonary/documents/aire_force_newsletter.pdf"
- ❖ **Patient & Caregiver Network.** Nationwide, online patient support program providing direct access to education, support and connection to others also living with lung disease. <https://www.lung.org/help-support/patient-caregiver-network>
- ❖ **COPD videos:** [COPD https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL_ntiNjc6Gvk9gdq-NgmtOccsraOoymPB](http://COPDhttps://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL_ntiNjc6Gvk9gdq-NgmtOccsraOoymPB)
- ❖ **COPD Foundation:** [Managing the Cost of Inhalers | PRAXIS \(copdfoundation.org\)](http://ManagingtheCostofInhalers|PRAXIS(copdfoundation.org))

Pulmonary Rehab Week was March 10-16

Re-cap...

Big shout out to the vendors who dropped off treats:
Peter from VieMed &
Jeff from Lincare

There were Pulmonary Rehab themed word puzzles

The Pulmonologists provided donuts one day.

Mylu (inpatient Pulmonary Rehab) made sour dough bread and a Dulce De leche cake. Yummy!

Shari provided the apples & clementines.

We also had sweat towels to pass out.

Remember to keep exercising for the health of your lungs!



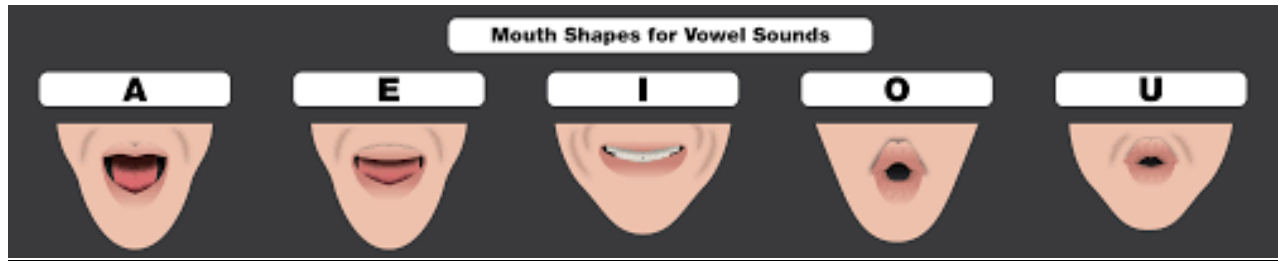
Brain Teaser: How many 3+ letter words can you make with the letters in **LUNGS** not including the word itself? No abbreviations or proper names.

Can you find at least 14 new words?

EXERCISE SPOTLIGHT

Facial & voice muscle strength:

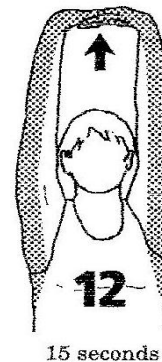
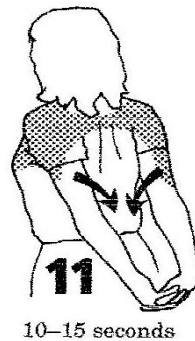
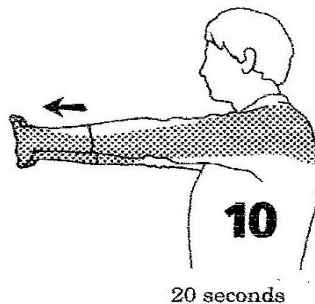
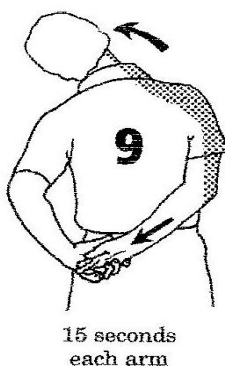
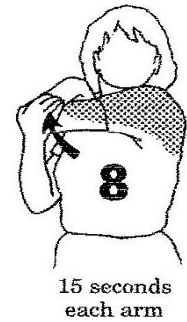
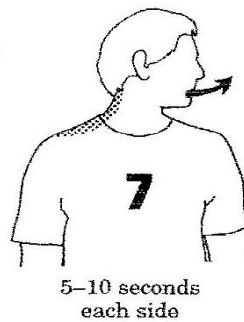
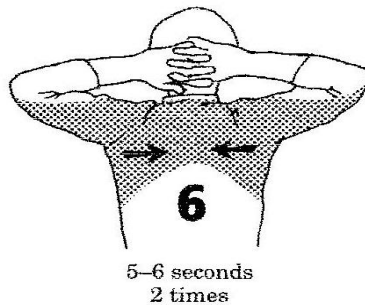
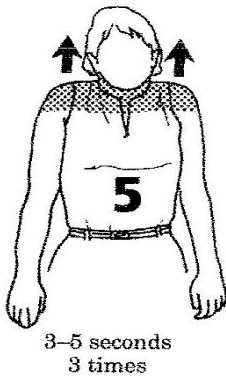
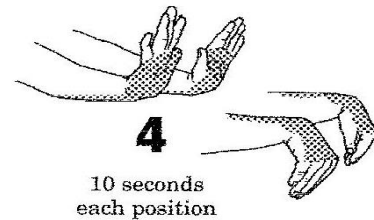
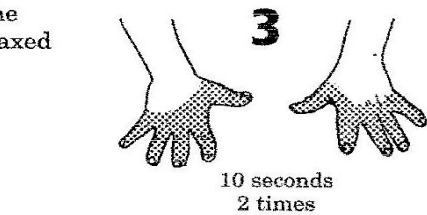
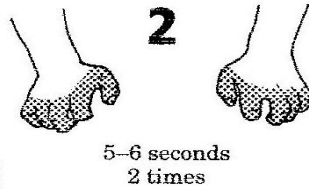
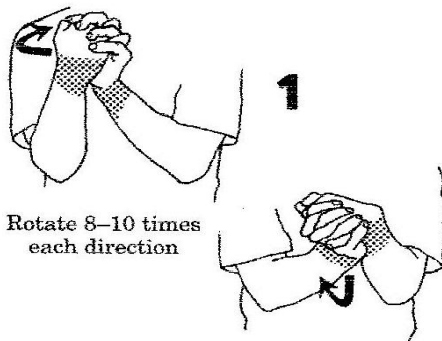
Daily: Repeat 5 rounds of the long vowel sounds. AAAAA, EEEEE, IIIIII, OOOOO, UUUUU.



Stretches for the Hands, Arms & Shoulders

Approximately 4 Minutes

This series of stretches works for repetitive stress problems in the hands and arms. Breathe naturally, stay comfortable, and be relaxed as you stretch.



Q&A Mailbag

Q: So, does breathing decrease anxiety? How deep is deep breathing?

A: First, anxiety is recognized as a major health issue & highly prevalent today. It's seen in young and old alike. Anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. This causes a physical stress reaction which is typically short term but in recent years, more people suffer a prolonged fight or flight response. This can lead to an impaired ability to recover from events that cause anxiety. These effects are similar to what excess caffeine will do.



Generally, the deeper the breath, the more the chest & abdomen expand, reaching a satisfying stretch point & hold the breath, satisfies the nerves in the lungs & diaphragm to be greatly gratified. (AHHHHH!!)

A "slow & deep breath" with a ratio of 1:2 (EX: breathe in for a count of 4 then breathe out for a count of 8 or in for 3 and out for 6) can reduce the state of anxiety. Another effective option is: "slow-paced breathing". This entails a rate of 6-8 breaths a minute. Finally, the last option is to regulate your breathing to a relaxed state for 5 minutes at least once a day.

HOW TO REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY



Q. Why/how does supplement oxygen help during exercise and recovery? How does oxygen help me improve my exercise capacity?

A. Just*trust*me!!! 😊 Ok, here is the shortest version of the longest story.

During periods of physical activity, the body works hard to maintain blood oxygen levels to meet the energy requirements. The brain, heart and lungs will get their portion of oxygen first. The small amount of leftover oxygen is shared with the rest of the organs including skin, liver, muscles, spleen, colon etc. Regardless of the level of muscle tone, once this initial energy is used up, the body will hunt internally for the oxygen it needs to convert glucose (sugar) to energy. So, briefly, glucose must be exposed to oxygen to convert sugar into energy with the byproducts of carbon dioxide and water (you exhale these by products). Without this process the body becomes weary. The first option to increase oxygen levels is by increasing the respiratory rate and depth. When breathing is inadequate, the body will limit distribution of oxygen to the muscles. Finally, When the demand for energy is high, the body will switch to converting glucose by splitting the sugar into 2 molecules and the result is pyruvic acid & lactic acid. Energy from lactic acid creates a small quick burst of power. The result of lactic acid is that some may remain in the muscles causing pain, tiredness & cramps. Therefore, energy from the conversion of glucose & oxygen is more desirable because it creates a longer lasting energy which is far better at increasing exercise endurance and improving muscle contractility. The more toned the muscles are, the less oxygen is required for muscle movement.

Therefore, adding oxygen allows the body to stay in "Aerobic" or "with oxygen" exercise which is more efficient with energy conversion for people with lung disease. This is further impaired for individuals with COPD & on oxygen. By adding oxygen, the exercise endurance threshold can be elevated easing the demand for oxygen as well as relieve the respiratory demand. Some athletes use oxygen to enhance their performance capacity, but they are not dealing with an oxygen deficit due to lung disease or worried about negative side effects from oxygen misuse.

In Pulmonary Rehab, when oxygen sats are below 92% (< 88%), adding oxygen for a workout improves performance capacity, in turn, decreases muscle fatigue, and provides an adequate oxygen load to achieve a reasonable functional capacity. Overall, a well-maintained exercise endurance capacity improves the ability for functional daily living due to stronger muscle tone, lessening fatigue, and reduced shortness of breath.

Q. What is urge surfing technique?

A. Urge surfing is a technique that can be used to avoid acting on any behavior that you want to reduce or stop. Some examples are smoking, over-eating, substance use, spending, lashing out at someone, etc. Urges rarely last longer than 30 minutes if you don't "feed" them. Rather than giving in to an urge, a person learns to ride it out, like a surfer riding a wave. After a short time, the urge will pass on its own. To learn more about "Urge Surfing", search for "What is the urge surfing technique?".

Brain Teaser solution: How many words can you make with the letters in LUNGS not including the word itself?

I was able to find 14 new words: sung, snug, slug, sun, lug, lugs, gul, guls, gun, guns, gnu, gnus, gnus, slung. Let me know if you find more!

😊 Sue's snip-its: 😊

MEME: Today I learned an ostrich forgets. Today I learned my spirit animal is an ostrich!

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