

Nose clearing exercises

This leaflet outlines some exercises developed by Dr Konstantin Buteyko that aim to improve the function of your nose for breathing.

Function of the nose

The nose is the gateway to your lungs! It is designed for breathing and smelling while the mouth is designed for eating, drinking and speaking. Its functions include:

- Filtering out dust, pollens and allergens.
- Humidifying to keep the air moist.
- Warming the air to prevent cold air irritating the airways.
- Sterilising the air to kill bacteria and viruses.



Who is Dr Konstantin Buteyko?

In the 1950s a Ukranian respiratory doctor called Konstantin Buteyko recognised that many people were not breathing properly. He noticed that many people seemed to be unable to breathe through their noses and developed some nose clearing exercises to help improve the nasal function.

The exercises

These nose clearing exercises are not suitable for those suffering with ear, nose or throat infections. People with neck trauma or an ongoing neck condition may need to modify the exercises.

It is important to remember that one side of your nose is normally more blocked than the other. Throughout the day, the sides will alternate – this is a natural phenomenon called ‘the nasal cycle’.

Step 1: Nodding (repeat 10 times)

- Breathing through your nose, slowly nod your head backwards and forwards, allowing gravity to take over so you feel a slight drop as your head comes to a natural resting position.
- Your neck muscles need to be relaxed and as your head goes forward you will feel a slight stretching in the muscles at the back of your neck.

- Never force the movement.
- Breathe smoothly, gently and as quietly as possible.
- Slowly co-ordinate the movement with your breathing: breathe in as your head goes back and breathe out as your head goes forward.

Step 2: Tipping (repeat 3 times)

- Take a normal breath in and out and hold your nose.
- Tip your head backwards and forwards 3-6 times while holding your breath (and nose). This movement will be faster than the previous exercises.
- Release your nose and breathe in gently through your nose.

Step 3: Hold and Blow (repeat 6 times)

- Take a normal breath in and out.
- Hold your nose.
- Increase the pressure at the back of your nose by gently trying to blow through your nose while still holding it closed – you may feel your ears ‘pop’!
- Don’t blow out your cheeks.
- Keep the gentle pressure for a count of 5.
- Release your nose and breathe in gently through your nose.

Further information

Buteyko Breathing Association www.buteykobreathing.org

Visit the Trust website at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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