



Body

Better Breathing for Better Health

With the Buteyko Method

Michael Lingard

Why has the act of breathing been relegated to the backstage of the medical drama? Breathing is the most significant action in our lives; we arrive on earth with our first inspiration, we leave with a final expiration and in between we take roughly 500 million breaths. It's oddly assumed we all breathe correctly, not too much, not too little but just right.

It's a strange assumption but we are happy to except that we get back problems from poor posture, gut problems from bad eating habits, ill from over indulgence of alcohol and so forth. Why therefore should we assume that we breathe correctly? When did your doctor last check your breathing rate?

The fact is we don't breathe correctly. A large proportion of us breathe badly, with the majority of us over breathing or hyperventilating. Chronic hyperventilation leads to losses of carbon dioxide

(CO₂) at a rate greater than our bodies produce it, which means we have a reduce level of CO₂ in the lungs and blood stream. Lowered levels of CO₂ cause many problems including the smooth muscle which wraps around our organs, airways and blood vessels to spasm and tighten, the blood's delivery of oxygen to the tissue is reduced, more histamine is released which creates strong reactions to allergens or irritants, and the body's chemistry as a whole is increasingly disturbed. Symptoms from all these changes include those of asthma, panic attacks, hay fever, hypertension and fatigue. Hypocapnia (when the level of carbon dioxide in the blood is lower than normal) is established and maintained by our CO₂ receptors in the brain that begin to accept this situation as the norm. We become "locked in" to over breathing.

Despite the amazing advances in modern medicine, scientists have not yet found a cure for asthma and are forced to treat its symptoms with medication. Professor Konstantin Buteyko, a Russian respiratory physician and scientist developed the Buteyko Method, a system of breathing retraining, which has a dramatic effect on asthma and other breathing related disorders.

The Buteyko Method is a proven teaching programme that reduces hyperventilation, and with other lifestyle changes reduces the symptoms of asthma and other breathing related disorders, reducing the need for medication and putting the individual back in control of their health. Clinical trials conducted at the Mater Hospital in Brisbane demonstrated the benefits of the Buteyko Method for asthmatics. Since then tens of thousands have enjoyed improved health all over the world after learning the Buteyko Method. There are still too few Buteyko teachers to meet the needs of the 5.1 million asthmatics in the UK alone. Visit the website for more information about Buteyko in Kent and worldwide at www.buteykokent.co.uk Better still, enrol on the next course and enjoy a healthier life through better breathing.

Written by Michael Lingard on 01580 752852.

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