Can Poor Posture With COPD Cause Shortness of Breath?

by AMY MANLEY

COPD and Posture

While there are several causes of the breathing problems that occur with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), experts are recently studying the link between COPD and posture. While proper posture cannot prevent or cure your COPD, learning how to maintain correct posture can help you reduce your shortness of breath.

Can Poor Posture Cause Shortness of Breath?

When you sit or stand slouched over, your ribcage and sternum press against your diaphragm, meaning your body has to work harder to breathe properly. When you have COPD, your body is already working harder than normal to get enough oxygen – poor posture only amplifies this.

While posture may play into your shortness of breath or breathing with COPD, there are other things that may impact your breathing and COPD, factors like environmental, physical activity, anxiety, and flare-ups are all types of shortness of breath and common symptom triggers.

How to Improve Breathing and Posture With COPD

By using the steps outlined below, you'll improve your COPD and posture, and you should find that breathing with COPD becomes a bit easier.

Sitting Posture

The posture you have while sitting plays a huge role in your ability to breathe properly. While COPD alone makes breathing difficult, additional factors like activity, excitement, and adverse weather conditions can make this symptom act up for you. By using these tips while sitting, your breathing ability will be improved.

Sitting Posture 1

- Keep your feet flat on the floor at all times.
- Keep your chest slightly moved forward, rather than straight up.
- Place your elbows on your knees and if needed rest your chin in the palm of your hands.
- Keep the muscles within your neck and shoulder area relaxed.

Sitting Posture 2

- Keep your feet flat on the floor at all times.
- Keep your cheat slightly bent forward.
- Use a table to rest your arms directly in front of your body.
- Use your forearms or a pillow to rest your head.

Standing Posture

Not many people realize the importance of standing correctly, and the impact it has on your ability to breathe. By using these posture tips while standing, you may find that your breathing ability improves greatly.

Standing Posture 1

- Keep your feet a shoulders width apart.
- Use a wall to rest your hips on.
- Use your thighs as a hand rest.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed, with them handing forward slightly, and your arms dangled in front of you.

Standing Posture 2

- Use a piece of furniture to rest your elbows or hands, keeping them at a shoulders height.
- Use your forearms as a headrest, allowing your neck to relax.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed.

Sleeping Posture

The posture you keep during your sleeping hours will not only help you breathe better, but can even improve your quality of sleep. Many people do not realize how much their posture is improving their sleep until the change it and see the benefits of good sleep posture.

Sleeping Posture 1

- While laying on your side, use one pillow as a guard between your legs and the other to keep your head elevated.
- Keep your back straight once the pillows are in place.

Conclusion

While these are only a few changes that may not seem like a big deal, they can make all the difference. While changing your posture can feel difficult at first, it will become second nature after just a short time of reinforcement.

If you're looking for additional ways to improve your breathing and posture, there are plenty of breathing exercises for COPD patients online that are worth trying in conjunction with these posture exercises. Another option is to work with a physical therapist or pulmonary rehabilitation specialist to help correct your COPD and posture while breathing.

One more suggestion is that your shortness of breath is also related to anxiety or other types of mental distress, you should make an appointment with a therapist who can provide coping techniques, and other resources, to help prevent or calm anxiety or panic attacks.