



I have a question for you, [SweatCommunity](#)...

"When did you learn how to breathe?"

For some of you, it was the first day you were born. For others, it was in high school. For most of you, it's TODAY (just in time before 2015)!

Uhhhh, what?

Take as big a breath as you can right now.

Did you inhale through your nose or through your mouth? Did you fill your chest with air or did you fill your stomach?

Chances are you did one of these incorrectly. No, not incorrectly where you are going to suffocate anytime soon, but incorrectly in the sense that you can be getting much more (and better) oxygen into your system.

If you've been a reader of our SweatCommunity newsletters over the years, it's likely that you exercise. Whether you run long distance, sprint, lift weights, or go to [boot camp](#) your breathing style is one of the tip-top most important factors in your performance. But I bet you've never even thought about that until this very moment, huh?

The average adult takes about 28,000 breaths per day. Imagine if you got even just 2% better quality oxygen with each of those breaths. All that wonderful oxygen to your blood, brain, and muscles can really change your world.

With all that said, let's learn how to breathe!

Nose vs Mouth Breathing

Some people will make the case that inhaling through your nose helps warm the air before it gets to your lungs and also circulates to your brain faster. But every breathing expert agrees that breathing through your mouth is optimal for one primary reason: you get more oxygen.

In addition to providing more oxygen, mouth-breathing helps keep your jaw relaxed as you run. The more relaxed you are when exercising, the more energy you save.

**Verdict: Inhale through your mouth!*

Chest vs Stomach Breathing

Ok, here's where I bet over 75% of you breath incorrectly.

Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. Take a deep breath. Does your chest inflate or does your stomach inflate more?

If you get more air in your chest, you are breathing inefficiently! Another good way to know if someone's a chest-breather is if their shoulders raise/shrug as they breathe.

You should be breathing from your stomach! Take a breath again and fill your stomach with oxygen. Now, exhale by blowing out the air (like you are blowing through a straw). Do it again and this time keep blowing until you have no air left.

Notice your core muscles tighten up? Now you're using your diaphragm to breathe. The diaphragm will help your body use much more oxygen and refresh your lungs much better than chest breathing. It also will help your joint mobility by shifting your ribcage into place.

**Verdict: Use your stomach/diaphragm to breathe!*

How to Get Rid of a Side-Cramp!

If you've ever gone on a run, you've experienced that painful stitch in your ribs that feels like a knife in your side every step you take. I don't know about you, but being stabbed in the side makes me run slower.

To get rid of it, try this:

- Avoid short, shallow breaths
- Focus on good, deep diaphragm breaths (tight core!).
- Try to synchronize your exhale with the landing of your non-stitch side foot (not every stride, but every 2-3)
- When you exhale and land, it causes tension in your body. By switching your landing foot to your non-cramp side, it will release the tension in your cramp and it should be gone quickly!

To a Safe New Year's Eve and a Cramp-Free 2015,

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