

# RUNNING FOR BEGINNERS: BEST BREATHING TECHNIQUES FOR RUNNING

by [Herwig Natmessnig](#)

Many [beginner runners](#) quickly find themselves out of breath while jogging. This usually means that their pace is too fast. But it can also be due to inefficient breathing. In today's post, we show you how to breathe properly while running and thus [improve your performance](#).

## DEEP BELLY BREATHING VS SHALLOW CHEST BREATHING

While running you should use deep belly breathing (or diaphragmatic breathing) as it's better for efficient and maximal oxygen uptake (VO<sub>2</sub> max) than shallow chest breathing. The air you breathe in only remains in the lungs a short time, thus preventing a complete exchange of air. This then reduces the amount of oxygen you take in. Poor breathing technique is often the reason why people get the [dreaded side stitch while running](#).

Deep belly breathing, on the other hand, is much more efficient when running because it uses the entire capacity of the lungs. The air you breathe in also travels down to the lower portion of your lungs and stays there longer. This increases your oxygen uptake.

### Note:

Exhaling deeply and consciously will automatically lead you to inhale deeply. This then helps improve your VO<sub>2</sub> max.

# HOW YOU CAN PRACTICE DEEP BELLY BREATHING

1. Lie down on the floor or on your sofa and place your hands or a light book on your stomach.
2. Breathe in and out deeply and consciously. You should be able to clearly see the book rise when you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.
3. Focus on trying to exhale all the air out of your lungs. With a little practice, belly breathing will become automatic and feel completely natural.

## NOSE BREATHING VS MOUTH BREATHING

In general, the goal should be to take in oxygen and expel carbon dioxide as efficiently as possible. Naturally, you can't take in as much air through your nose as you can through your mouth. Thus, it makes sense to mainly breathe through your mouth when running. While it is true that the air is filtered and warmed when you breathe through your nose, it is not a good idea to deprive your body of a way of achieving maximum oxygen uptake when your body is under stress. As the intensity of your running increases, you will soon see that you cannot get enough oxygen by simply breathing through your nose.

## PROPER BREATHING RHYTHM WHILE RUNNING

- Easy runs at low intensity: 3:3 (three steps while breathing in and three steps while breathing out)
  - Medium-intensity runs: 2:2
  - Maximum and high-intensity runs: 1:1 (i.e. the final burst at the end of a race)
- These rates should only be used as a rule of thumb, and they do not apply to every runner. The best way is to try out a few different breathing rhythms and find the one that feels most comfortable to you.

Some studies even reject the notion of setting recommendations on breathing rates. Regardless of your breathing rate and [running intensity](#), the most important thing is to focus on deep, conscious belly breathing so you can increase the length of time you breathe in and breathe out.

## BOTTOM LINE:

Avoid shallow chest breathing while running and focus on deep belly breathing. Breathe through both your nose and mouth, but primarily through the latter. Try out several different breathing rhythms and choose the one that feels most comfortable to you. Often *your* best breathing technique for running will develop by itself over time.