Keep It Moving

Don’t let exercise-induced asthma limit your fitness goals.

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Are your workouts interrupted by consistent coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath? If so, you may have exercise-induced asthma (EIA), a respiratory ailment that occurs when the passages from the windpipe to your lungs become narrow, making it difficult to breathe.

EIA is usually sparked by vigorous activity, especially in cold or dry environments. With symptoms similar to those caused by regular asthma, EIA triggers include smoke, smog, pollen and chemicals.

Various factors, however, may increase your chances of developing EIA or asthma. These include having parents with asthma, living in large urban areas blanketed with environmental pollutants and suffering from chronic respiratory infections as a child.

Angel Waldron, spokesperson for the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), adds that obesity is also linked to EIA. “If you’re not doing any physical activity, your lungs are weaker and unable to fend off those spasms that can come with asthma,” Waldron says.

While physical exertion may be a challenge for those with EIA, Waldron emphasizes that exercising on a regular basis can significantly relieve symptoms.

What’s a regular basis? Brian Smart, MD, an allergist with Dupage Medical Group in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, advises people with EIA to exercise a minimum of three times weekly, for at least 30 minutes or long enough to noticeably raise your heart rate. “Warm up and cool down before and after a workout,” Smart says. “It helps your body get ready for the abrupt new change in air flow.” He recommends allotting 10 to 15 minutes to warm up and about 5 to 10 minutes to cool down each time you exercise.

Think you might have EIA? Consult with an allergist to get an asthma diagnosis and develop a management plan. Proper treatment can help you breathe easy—even during your workouts.

BREATHE EASY

Fall asthma season is here, but that doesn’t mean an end to outdoor workouts—even for people

who suffer from exercise-induced asthma (EIA). Try these options to avoid symptoms.

- Use an asthma inhaler or broncho-- dilator 15 to 20 minutes before you work out to keep airways open and control EIA for several hours.
- Warm up before exercising and cool down afterward.
- Avoid vigorous activities that require continuous exertion for extended periods of time.
- Choose exercises that involve short intermittent periods of activity, such as walking or jogging, which are generally well tolerated if you have EIA.

For more specific medical advice about how to manage EIA, however, always consult your doctor.
—LaToya Johnson

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/exercise-induced-asthma-17188-8929