

Exercise triggers my asthma

Asthma and exercise

Exercise is great for health and well-being, and having asthma shouldn't stop you playing sport or taking part in any other activity.

But sometimes people with asthma get symptoms when they exercise, especially in dry, cold air or without the right preparation. The symptoms usually depend on how long and hard you exercise and how dry and cool the air is.

What should you do?

Get active with asthma

- Don't let your asthma stop you being physically active.
- Choose an activity you enjoy and aim for at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity every day or most days.
- Consider getting involved in structured exercise – people with asthma who participate in physical training feel better.
- Having asthma shouldn't stop you from getting involved in sports or physical activity, whether just for fun or more competitively. Many of our Olympic athletes have asthma.

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Exercise tips

If you get asthma symptoms when you get active, there are some things you can do:

- Get as fit as possible – the fitter you are, the harder you need to work before symptoms start.

- Exercise in a place that is warm and humid – avoid cold, dry air if possible.
- Avoid exercising where there are high levels of pollens, dusts, fumes or pollution.
- Breathe through your nose when you exercise.
- Do a proper warm-up and cool-down.

Keep your reliever handy and be prepared if your asthma flares up. If your asthma does flare up, don't ignore it or hope the symptoms will go away by themselves.

Take action

Asthma symptoms after exercise are common but treatable. If exercise triggers your asthma symptoms, tell your doctor so you can find the treatment that works best for you. This could be as simple as taking a couple of puffs of your reliever as you warm up.

How to treat a flare-up

- Stop what you're doing.
- Follow your asthma action plan. If you don't have an action plan, take 4 separate puffs of a blue/grey reliever.
- Only return to your exercise or activity if your breathing returns to normal.
- If the symptoms don't go away, or if they return while you're exercising again, use your reliever as before. Don't do any more exercise that day.

If symptoms still don't go away, follow your asthma action plan - you may need to see your doctor.

Competitive sports

If you participate in competitive sports, make sure you and your doctor know which asthma medicines you are allowed to take.

You can check with the Sport Integrity Australia or the World Anti-Doping Authority.