



# Horse Breather

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[www.equinebreathing.com](http://www.equinebreathing.com)

## 10 Breathing tips for riders Part 2

Here are 6 more tips that enable you to improve your own breathing simply by changing your daily habits. Improved (that is reduced) breathing changes the physiology back towards normal, encouraging better performance and health.

You may wish to improve your breathing if;

- The pause after breathing out is less than 45 seconds before you feel the first inclination to breathe in again, (see Part 1 ('Horse Breather' 42) for details
- You experience any of the over breathing signs mentioned in 'Horse Breather' 5
- You have chronic ailments
- You are dissatisfied with your performance in terms of stamina, suppleness, focus, calmness or concentration.

Tips 1 to 4 in Part 1 ('Horse Breather' 42) involve using nose breathing in various ways instead of mouth breathing, in order to reduce the amount of air breathed in. These are simple tips that can be easily implemented unless you have a blocked nose in which case email and ask me for the nose clearing exercise.

Here are the remaining tips

### 5. Stop sighing!

Avoid expressing yourself in ways that involve over breathing, for example sighing, or a sharp intake of breath in surprise or excitement. Avoid other habits such as blowing on your hot food or drink or sucking air in with hot food or drink. Periods as short as a minute of over breathing can reduce the oxygen to the brain by 40% as shown in this scan, so sighing and other bad habits do count.

### 6. Wear a dust mask

When I created Equine Breathing and started using Equine Breathers, I was impressed by how effective they were for horses. I soon realised that a dust mask works in a similar way to reduce breathing and help bring carbon dioxide levels back up, especially during strenuous exercise.

As with any training, you will need to gradually build up to using a dust mask while doing vigorous activity.

Please note that if you wear a dust mask for long enough you may get clearings. Clearings and how to manage them are explained in the Equine Breather DVD. If you are not familiar with clearings you can email me but also take the unrefined salt (see below).

to understand how and why over breathing is detrimental to health see the How does it work page at [www.equinebreathing.com](http://www.equinebreathing.com)

a human brain showing a 40% reduction in oxygen after only one minute of over breathing

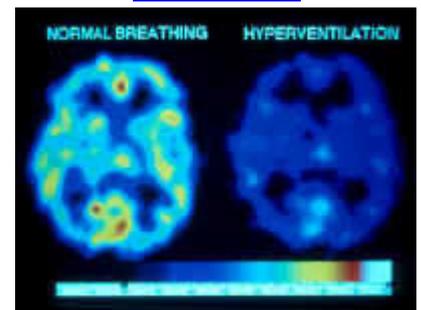


Photo courtesy of Dr P Litchfield



soft masks with no hard filters are the most comfortable to wear

## **7. Hum (mouth kept shut of course)**

Humming tends to lengthen the time between breaths which reduces the volume of air taken in. It can also reduce the size of the in-breath as you want to try to shorten the in breath so as not to get out of time. If you enjoy humming it's a good way to improve the breathing. You may need to concentrate in order to breathe in through the nose rather than the mouth at first but should soon get into the habit.

Humming also stimulates the nasal passages to produce nitric oxide which acts much like carbon dioxide in improving the efficiency of gas exchange in the lungs.

My horse hates it if I hum (and I don't blame him) so this may only be an option for those of you that can hold a tune and avoid offending the horse!

Again you will need to build up gradually. At first you may only be able to manage a few notes before you need to take a breathe (through the nose!) but if you persist your fitness will improve and you will be able to hum more notes each breath and to hum during increasingly strenuous activity.

## **8. Maintain good posture**

Good (reduced) breathing is controlled by the diaphragm. If you slouch the diaphragm is squashed and cannot work effectively. The chest, back and neck muscles take over the breathing movements, but over react, resulting in over breathing. Maintaining a relaxed upright posture with minimal pulling down on the spine enables the diaphragm to do its job unimpeded. Try not to sit hunched up for long periods (eg at a desk). If necessary use cushions to support your spine in its natural upright position and reduce muscle tension.

Put your awareness to your chest and diaphragm when possible to see which is effecting the breathing and relax and release the diaphragm if its being hindered by tense hunched posture. Don't try and physically stop the chest muscles working as that may make things worse, just try and enable them to relax by allowing the spine to be upright and the diaphragm to function.



sitting with the spine relaxed and diaphragm free to function

## **9. Practise Equine Breathing with your horse**

As you probably know, Equine Breathing is enjoyable and relaxing for your horse as it decreases adrenaline production and encourages the calm anabolic state. Regular sessions are helpful to you as well as your horse, especially if you focus on your own breathing, making it as quiet and gentle as possible.

In addition use Equine Breathing at times that are usually stressful for the horse and therefore for you (eg travelling, clipping, leaving field mates, weaning, traffic etc). This cuts down the escalation of over breathing that might otherwise occur and enables both of you to maintain better breathing and stay calm and effective through the event.



Ellie and Bjork doing 1N

Focussing on improving your own breathing during such

times of stress using these tips (especially not talking!) will help reduce adrenaline production and in you and your horse allowing you both to recover more quickly.

See the Equine Breathing web site for details and free instructions on how to do Equine Breathing.

[www.equinebreathing.com](http://www.equinebreathing.com)

### **10. Breath training courses**

If you are serious about improving your own breathing over and above use of tips 1 – 9, you may wish to investigate Buteyko courses. These courses teach you exercises to reduce your breathing and enable you to monitor your progress. They tend to be geared to those with health problems such as asthma, sleep disorders, allergies, high blood pressure etc.

For information on Buteyko courses go to [www.buteyko.info](http://www.buteyko.info)

I run Rider Breath Training courses which are similar but concentrate on improving the rider's performance including stamina, concentration, flexibility and confidence.

For more information on Riders' training courses email [clare@equinebreathing.com](mailto:clare@equinebreathing.com) or use the 'contact us' link

For further information on the physiology of breathing see [www.bp.edu](http://www.bp.edu) (US) and [www.mindfulphysiology.co.uk](http://www.mindfulphysiology.co.uk) which also run better breathing courses in the US and UK.

### **Clearings and unrefined salt**

As with any form of training it is important to build up gradually with any of these techniques. If you do use any of them for more than just a brief sample then you will change your body's physiology.

It would be advisable to get some unrefined salt (grey) sea salt and replace any refined (white) salt in your diet with it. Like the horses you should avail yourself of this real salt anytime you feel you need it and especially if you experience signs of clearing (details given in the Equine Breathing Starter Guide and in the How to use the Equine Breather training DVD).

The high mineral content and balance will help your body as it starts to function better. The more you implement these techniques the more healing and detoxification you are likely to do. Strange things can happen so you are welcome to email me with any queries.

If you try any of these tips I would be interested to hear how you get on as the next article will be on the benefits of improving your breathing and it would be good to include your experience.

Till next time  
breathe easy  
Clare



real (unrefined) salt is nutrient rich and grey in colour

email queries or your experience to [clare@equinebreathing.com](mailto:clare@equinebreathing.com)