

OPTIMAL BREATHING

Sometimes when you experience shortness of breath, your breathing may become very fast and labored. When this happens, your vocal folds may not have time to move away from each other. As a result, the vocal folds form a partial obstruction to breathing. Sometimes they even vibrate as you try to force air through them to breathe. This vibration can cause a voice sound called stridor.

When this happens, you may realize some relief as follows:

1. Relax. Try to calm down. If possible, sit in a quiet place where you will not be distracted.
2. Breathe in through your nose. This should be done with just enough force to enable you to feel the air passing by your nostrils. Calm, nasal breathing will encourage your vocal folds to move away from each other.
3. Take the air in slowly.
4. Breathe out through your mouth.
5. Repeat this as you try to slow your breathing rate.

If you need help practicing this, a speech pathologist may be able to do so. If you would like help, we can offer you the name of a speech pathologist located near your home.