



RUNTEX UNIVERSITY

## TAKE A DEEP BREATH

How should I breathe? This is one of the most often asked running questions. Breathing is a very natural and well regulation function of the body. If you are breathing too hard, your body is telling you to slow down. If you start your running or walking easy enough, your body will warm-up and you won't need to ask the question. If you start too fast, you will be breathing heavily, trying to get more oxygen into your body and to rid yourself of the carbon dioxide, which is a very uncomfortable feeling and part of the pain associated with running.

There is a natural pattern to breathing, it is inhaling and exhaling once every 3-4 foot strikes. Breath deep enough to bring in oxygen and exhale enough to let out the carbon dioxide. Finding this balance comes easy if you are pacing properly and don't try to override your natural breathing rhythm. If you breath too shallow and quickly, you will constantly mix the fresh oxygen and carbon dioxide. A smooth breathing pattern will rid your body of the carbon dioxide and bring in fresh air with lots of useful oxygen.

It is very important to know when it is okay to be breathing heavy and when its not. If you are just starting and breathing heavy, you are starting too fast, slow down and let your body warm up. When you are running up a hill plan on an increase in your breathing unless you slow your pace or walk. When you are doing intervals expect to breathe heavily, just let your breathing go back to normal before starting the next interval.

Distance running has to be a very comfortable rhythmic activity. It isn't about enduring pain, it is about pacing yourself painfree. You can use your breathing as a signal, like having a heart rate monitor on. Expect an increase in your breathing rhythm when you increase your pace. If your body is ready for the faster pace, your breathing will adjust. If it doesn't, you will need to slow down until it does. This is a great way to control your intensity and pain levels.

