

- Make sure that you are breathing or can breathe as described below.
- Work with your physician and with the exercises described at right to attain a healthy posture.
- Address any chronic cough that you may have, causes of chronic cough that are not always obvious include:
 - o Heartburn
 - o Asthma

Sometimes, after a surgery or for those of us who hold our bellies in while breathing we teach ourselves incorrectly how to breathe. The following exercise will help us relearn the correct way to breathe and can be done in any position, but only laying and seated positions will be reviewed here. Practice this 2-4 times a day and at bed-time.

In the laying on the back position, place a hand on your stomach below your belly button and the other hand on your chest. Take a slow, deliberate deep breath and feel your chest and your belly rise together and after a slight pause allow them to fall together. Spend a couple of minutes breathing in this manner (20-30 breaths). Now, practice belly breathing. Taking a deep breath and focusing it all through your tummy, with relatively little chest movement is the practice of belly breathing. Do this for a couple of minutes in a relaxed manner until it feels quite natural. Belly breathing should be your natural way of breathing when lying flat on your back.

In the seated position with a firm flat seat, stick your belly out and arch your back while taking a slow deep breath. Then, allow yourself to slouch as you exhale in a relaxed manner. This exercise reinforces belly breathing in a more upright position. If you are having a hard time mastering it take a belt and fix it around your chest to reinforce the use of your abdomen and not your chest to breathe.

Posture is always better if effort is made to elongate the body, as if a string suspended your crown from the sky.

- **Standing Posture:** A) Poor – stooped, head forward & shoulders rounded; B) Medium – head & shoulders are back; C) Good – head & shoulders are back, weight on the forefoot.
- **Seated Posture:** D) Poor – slumped, rounded shoulders, & head forward; E) Good – buttocks forward on chair with one foot placed behind; F) Good – a small wedge under the buttocks; G) Using a lumbar roll or support with arms supported by an armrest that doesn't draw the shoulders up.
- H) **Walking;** I) **Jogging;** & J) **Stairs** – all done as if suspended from the ceiling.

Postural Considerations

