



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.*

## Helping Hand™

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

# Exercises for Breathing, Posture, and Chest Mobility

This exercise guide will help improve your child's breathing and how they hold their body while sitting and standing (posture). By doing these, muscles in their belly (abdomen), neck, and back will be more flexible and stronger. This makes breathing easier.

Check your child's posture before they start the exercises. Do this by having them stand with their head and neck straight, stomach flat, back straight, and shoulders held back.

### Diaphragm Breathing – Sitting or Standing

1. **Breathe in** through your nose like you're smelling a flower. Let your stomach fill up with air.
2. **Blow out** through your mouth like you're blowing out a candle. Gently and let your stomach fall.



### Diaphragm Breathing – Lying Down

1. Lie on your back. Your arms can be down at your sides or on your stomach.
2. **Breathe in** to feel your stomach rise.
3. **Blow out** slowly to let your stomach fall.



## Back Arch

1. Lie face-down on the floor or a mat.
2. **Breathe in** and raise your back, shoulders, and head off the floor without using your arms for support.
3. **Blow out** as you lay down again.



## Shoulder Pinch

1. Sit or stand with your back straight. Put both hands on your hips with your elbows bent and out to the sides.
2. **Breathe in** while keeping your hands on your hips and pull your elbows back so your shoulder blades pinch together.
3. **Blow out** as you bring your elbows back to your sides.



## Shoulder Depression

1. Start in a seated position.
2. **Breathe in** as you sit with your back straight.
3. **Blow out** as you gently bend your neck sideways toward the right. At the same time, reach out towards the ground with your left hand to pull your left shoulder down.
4. Do the same with the other side.



## Pectoral Stretch

1. Stand in a doorway and raise your elbows to shoulder level.
2. Bend your elbows to put your hands inside the doorway on the walls.
3. Lean into the doorway while keeping your back straight.
4. **Breathe in** as you lean forward.
5. **Blow out** as you return back to a straight position.



Image source: Optimal Chiropractic with permission

## Side Bends

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Stretch your arms out to the sides.
2. **Blow out** and bend to the right.
3. **Breathe in** as you stand straight again.
4. **Blow out** and bend to the left.
5. **Breathe in** as you stand straight again.



## Trunk Rotation

1. Start by sitting. You can cross one leg over the other, like in the picture, or keep them both out straight.
2. Twist to the right as you **blow out**.
3. **Breathe in** as you face forward.
4. Twist to the left as you **blow out**.
5. **Breathe in** as you face forward again.





## Chin Tucks

1. Sit with your back and shoulders straight.
2. Look straight ahead with chin level to the floor.
3. Pull your chin in towards the chest while keeping your chin in line with the floor.
4. Hold this position for 5 seconds.
5. Relax your chin back into starting position.



## Cat Cow

1. Get into hands and knees position so that hands are under the shoulders and knees are under the hips.
2. Take a deep **breath in** while you drop your stomach toward the floor and look toward the ceiling. This is cow pose.
3. **Blow out** while you arch your spine toward the ceiling and tuck your chin in looking down. This is cat pose.
4. Do these movements slowly.

