

# Exercise-Induced Asthma... *and Exercise!*

## So you've got exercise-induced asthma?

Does that mean you shouldn't exercise? No way! Everyone needs exercise to stay fit and healthy. And exercise can be especially important for you – it can even help your breathing and reduce your asthma symptoms!

The first step is to talk with your doctor and come up with an exercise plan that works for you. There's a good chance you'll be able to participate in just about any sport you want.

And there are some great strategies that can make exercise safer and more fun for you:

1. Warm up slowly before you exercise. It'll help prevent chest tightening.
2. Take your rescue medication right before exercising.
3. If you take everyday controller medication, make sure you really take it everyday. It'll help prevent symptoms on the days that you do exercise.
4. Try to breathe through your nose during exercise.
5. Try to avoid outdoor exercise during extremely cold weather.
6. Take rests during exercise and use your rescue medication if you experience any symptoms.
7. Cool down slowly after you exercise; it'll help your body adjust to the change in air temperature in your lungs.
8. If you're playing an organized team sport or taking lessons in a sport, make sure your coach knows about your asthma and how to treat it.

If you still don't think you're up to it, consider this. In the 1996 Olympics, 17% of the American athletes had asthma. That's about three times more than the average rate in the general population! And those athletes didn't just show up, they competed. About 30% of all the American athletes with asthma won a team or individual medal at those Olympics! Some of the superstar athletes who've had asthma include:

- Jerome "The Bus" Bettis (NFL star of the Pittsburgh Steelers)
- Amy Van Dyken (Olympic gold medalist in swimming)
- Jackie Joyner-Kersey (Olympic gold medalist in track and field)
- Jim "Catfish" Hunter, (Baseball Hall of Famer)
- Isaiah Thomas, (NBA star of the Detroit Pistons)
- Mary Jo Fernandez (Tennis champion)

**So don't let your asthma hold you back. Exercise will give you a fuller, happier life. Just take the right steps and get going today!**