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Doing 5 minutes of daily 'breath training' may reduce high blood pressure as effectively as medication, researchers say

- **A type of breath training can reduce blood pressure in just five minutes a day, new research suggests.**
- **A device that trains respiratory muscles was found to be as effective as medication and weight loss.**
- **Breath training can have quick results, but doesn't replace other healthy habits, researcher says**

Just 30 deep breaths a day with a special device could treat or prevent high blood pressure as effectively as medication and weight loss, new research suggests.

A five-minute breathing workout helps reduce blood pressure and improve heart health, potentially benefiting people of all ages and lifestyles, according to a study published September 15 in the Journal of Applied Physiology.

Researchers from the University of Colorado Boulder and the University of Arizona conducted tests with a total of 128 healthy adults, aged 18 to 82, who performed breathing exercises for six weeks.

Participants used a hand-held device, similar to an inhaler, for about five to 10 minutes per day, taking 30 deep breaths as the machine provided resistance, so respiratory muscles had to work harder to inhale.

Within two weeks, researchers started to notice improvements in participants' blood pressure, with only mild, temporary muscle soreness or lightheadedness as side effects. By the end of the trial, they saw an average reduction of 9 mmHg in systolic blood pressure.

The results are as effective as medication, possibly more effective than lifestyle changes like reducing sodium or losing weight, and could continue to improve over time, according to Daniel Craighead, lead author of the study and assistant research professor at the University of Colorado Boulder.

"People can expect fairly rapid results," he told Insider. "We would expect that if you went longer, blood pressure would go down even more."

The researchers were also surprised to find that the training seemed to benefit not just people who needed to reduce their blood pressure, but also young, healthy participants.

"What's really exciting about this is that it's helpful for a wide range of adults. People with blood pressure at an unhealthy level could stand to benefit from adding this to their routine now," Craighead said. "But someone could start in their thirties and stick to it for years to help delay or prevent hypertension."

Resisted breathing could be a short cut to health benefits, but doesn't replace exercise

Medical interest in breath exercise isn't new. Slow, deep breathing is associated with benefits like stress relief, better sleep, healthier blood pressure, and improved mental health.

But resistance training for your breath could allow you to get more benefits in much less time, similar to how lifting heavy weights can boost strength gains, Craighead said.

And unlike other treatments for high blood pressure like medication or traditional exercise, the benefits of breath training could linger even after participants stop treatment, he added.

The research found when participants tried the training for six weeks, stopped for six weeks, and then re-tested, their blood pressure remained almost as low as right after the training period. Craighead said the research team is now exploring whether a shorter "maintenance dose" of training could help extend the benefits even more, with minimal time and effort.

They're also working on ways to help more people benefit from the technique. The lab trials used a \$500 device, but Craighead said a cheaper, simpler version is commercially available now, and researchers are working on an app to train people to use it effectively.

Still, it's not a replacement for other healthy habits. Regular exercise and good nutrition are important for maintaining muscle mass and keeping cholesterol low to prevent chronic illness long-term, according to Craighead.

"It's not a magic bullet for overall cardiovascular health, so people shouldn't stop doing other forms of exercise," he said.

To learn about an respiration exercise/training device go to:

<https://seniormarketplace.net/the-breather/>