

# Rehab News



Submitted By: Therapy Department at Healthcare Therapy Services, Inc.

## Therapy Can Help Those With COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or COPD is an umbrella term used to describe progressive lung diseases such as emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and non-reversible asthma. People with COPD suffer with continued and increasing breathlessness. The symptoms of COPD are sometimes difficult to notice because they can be mistaken for the common cold or normal aging. COPD affects an estimated 30 million people in the United States and over half of them are unaware of their condition. Taking note of your symptoms and asking your doctor to screen you can help you avoid losing major function in your lungs.

### Symptoms of COPD:

- Increased Breathlessness
- Frequent Coughing
- Wheezing
- Chest Tightness
- Increased Mucus
- Dizziness Upon Waking
- Swollen Ankles
- Frequent Respiratory Infections
- Difficulty Sleeping
- Fatigue or Inability to Exercise

COPD leads to the decline of pulmonary function and can lower your quality of life. Genetics and exposure to work/environmental pollutants can cause COPD, but the primary cause is smoking. Smoking and second-hand smoke account for 90% of COPD cases. Quitting smoking is extremely important to slow the progression of COPD. Slowing the progression of the disease can also be done through changing the air quality in your home and work environment.

**Exercise and rehabilitation are great weapons in the war on COPD.** Too often, patients with COPD avoid exercise because of their shortness of breath. Without exercise and improving endurance, the shortness of breath will only worsen. Physical therapists can help COPD patients exercise in a safe and secure environment. Physical and occupational therapy can improve your ability to exercise, your strength and endurance, and help you conserve energy doing daily tasks. Therapists can also help reduce difficulty in breathing by providing helpful breathing exercises. Talk to your doctor today about the benefits of both physical and occupational therapy to slow the progression of COPD!

Sources: COPD Foundation