



## Hyperventilation Syndrome

In today's modern world, we are all subjected to various stresses and strains.

August can be a particularly difficult month trying to juggle childcare as well as a career when schools have broken up for the summer.

At the Wye Physiotherapy Practice we are seeing an increasingly large number of people suffering from Hyperventilation.

Hyperventilation simply means overbreathing – breathing more than is necessary to meet the body's natural requirements.

1. This type of breathing leads to some or all of the following symptoms:
2. Frequent sighing or yawning
3. Pins and needles in the arms /hands and around the mouth.
4. Feeling breathless.
5. Palpitations.
6. Muscular aches around the neck / shoulders /jaw.
7. Dizziness & fainting.
8. Bloating stomach.
9. Panic attacks.
10. Unable to concentrate.

When we suspect that someone may be hyperventilating, the type of things we look for in our examination are:

1. An exaggerated movement of the upper chest when breathing.
2. An erratic and irregular breathing pattern.
3. A very short breath holding time. Some people can only hold their breath for as little as 5 seconds.
4. Over-inflation of the chest
5. An increased breathing rate – higher than the normal of around 15 breaths per minute.

Treatment is aimed at correcting your breathing pattern.

The main problem is that patients tend to not breathe out long enough before breathing in again.

We teach low slow nose breathing using the diaphragm and encourage relaxation of the upper chest.

Hyperventilation and stress go hand in hand.

Stress is a physical and emotional reaction to any situation. A certain amount of stress in our lives is essential to motivate us. However, excessive stress can have harmful effects on our physical and emotional health.

Practical steps can be taken to help yourself:

1. Allow yourself time to unwind at the end of the day
2. Work off stress with physical exercise.
3. Get enough sleep to recharge your batteries
4. Don` t rely on smoking, alcohol or coffee.
5. Try talking about your problems with someone else.
6. Practice saying no - to prevent a build up of too much pressure.
7. Organise daily routine with planned times to eat and have time for yourself

Remember: always consult your GP to rule out any serious health problems.