

second opinion**DIY oxygen****A couple of simple exercises which will help to keep your lungs safe and sound***JUG SURAIYA*

The old saying that nothing is free except love and fresh air is being proved cruelly wrong at the time of the coronavirus pandemic.

Air, or at least that component of it which is oxygen, is in severely short supply as Covid cases spiral upwards and more patients have to be put on ventilators. Consignments of oxygen are being hijacked by criminals, and in the blackmarket a cylinder of the life-saving gas costs several thousands of rupees.

For the rest of us trying to maintain good health, the good news is that there are a couple of simple exercises you can perform at home to ensure that your body is well-oxygenated.

One is the yog pranayam called Kapalbhati. You sit on the floor cross-legged, back upright. Take several deep breaths, in and out. Then exhale as completely as you can. Place your right hand on your abdomen and start sharply exhaling, feeling your abdomen contracting with each exhalation.

Gradually increase the number of exhalations to a maximum of 120 with practice. Performed daily, this will revitalise all your organs, including your lungs.

Another way to instantly boost your oxygen level is by performing the Ha, ha exercise which is currently doing the rounds as a video on social media. As the name given to it by some suggests, the Ha, ha exercise makes you look, and sound, weird, but it does wonders in increasing the oxygen in your bloodstream.

Seat yourself comfortably in a chair. Stick your tongue out as far as it will go and breathe out sharply – Ha! from your throat ten times. Then roll your tongue backwards in your mouth and again breathe out ten times – Ha! from your throat. Take a deep breath and hold it for 30 to 40 seconds before exhaling.

If you check your oxygen level on an oximeter, you should see a sharp increase in supply. In my case there was a jump of three points, from 95 to 98. If you're concerned about your bodily oxygen, try the exercise for yourself. You'll be agreeably surprised by the result.

Dropping oxygen reading requires immediate medical attention. But, short of that, the Ha, ha exercise could help us all to have the last laugh on the virus.

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