

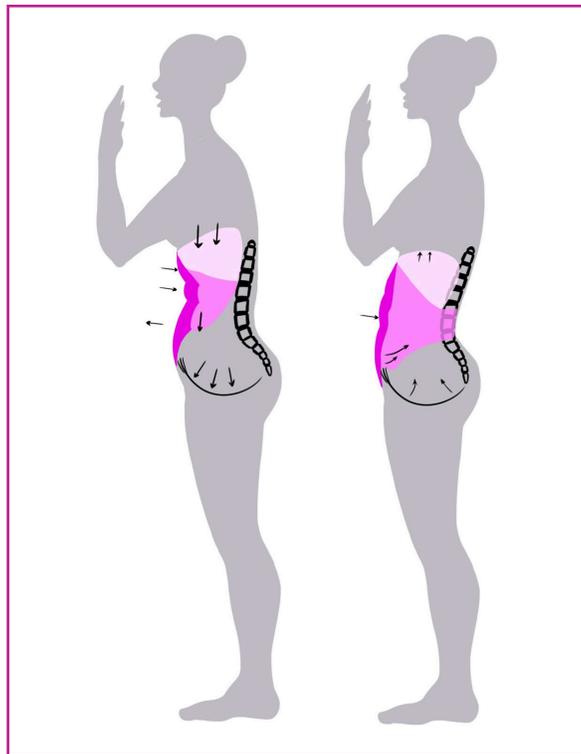
Coughing Prep

Coughing, sneezing, and nose-blowing all count as forced respiration. Forced respiration produces a lot of pressure and can be very hard on the core and pelvic floor. The good thing about overload pressure is that it can be trained! So, with the right strategies and exercises, you can safely help your client prepare for their next cold.

Things to assess with your client and troubleshooting tips:

- How are they breathing?
- How's their posture when they cough or sneeze? Rib cage and pelvic positioning.
- What exercises can you use to help prepare them strength-wise?

Breathing



- See if you can feel the difference between taking a shallow breath and then coughing versus taking a deep breath and then coughing.
- Get a great inhale down so the exhale can transition pressure back up instead of down.
- You often have anticipatory time when coughing or blowing your nose, so work on a well-intentioned inhale to set up a great exhale and better management of pressure.
- Don't blow your nose on the toilet! This gives mixed messages to your pelvic floor when it has to manage force during a time when it's supposed to be relaxing.

Body positioning and posture when coughing/sneezing/blowing nose

Rib Cage:

- Look for upper ab gripping when yelling, coughing, or sneezing. Are they crunching down on their rib cage? Does their lower belly pooch out?
- Think about getting more intercostals, bringing ribs in from the sides and front to back.
- Try cueing a slight rib cage lift when they cough or blow their nose to decrease upper ab pressure.
- Can place a hand on the lower abs to monitor that they aren't pooching out.

Pelvic positioning:

- Try a hinge when you cough or sneeze, even when lying down. Think, "lift rib cage and stick bottom out a little bit."
- This moves the pubic bone into the line of the force coming down so it can absorb it and support your pelvic floor.
- When you hinge, you are getting glute length which puts the pelvic floor on a bit more of a stretch, providing some natural tension and support.

Recap:

- Deep inhale down
- Rib cage doesn't crunch down in the front on the exhale
- Hinge hips back, can also try adding a hip shift
- Lower abs don't pooch

Preventative Exercises

Overload in a hinge position



- Grab a balloon or breathing trainer
- Prepare for overload in the position of coughing or sneezing
- Place a hand on your lower abs
- Inhale, your breath goes down and into your sides and back
- Exhale, blowing up the balloon without dropping your rib cage
- If you feel your abs bulge or pooch out, you are not managing pressure well
- If a balloon is too much, you can progress into it by blowing through a straw or clearing your throat at the intensity where you can manage pressure. Pursed lips to resist the air out also works well as a starting point.

Hands and Knees Breathing



** The arrows point to a microphone box, I'm not rounding my low back this much. Think of only slightly rounding the lower and evening out that round all the way up.**

- Spread out your fingers, connecting through the thumb and palm with wrists underneath shoulders and knees under hips
- Toes can be tucked or flat
- Arch down, and then lift the rib cage up and through. Don't crunch down with the rib cage
- While keeping tension in your abs, Inhale into your back
- Exhale into the balloon, lifting up through the front of the rib cage a bit more with your abs
- Maintain the pressing up and through the serratus throughout the exercise while not shifting back, overly rounding, or dropping your chest
- Feel your rib cage compress, but not drop
- Make sure your lower abs don't pooch. You might have to think of the exhale as coming more from the lower abs and keep the front of your ribs slightly lifted to help.
- Advance this by adding a balloon (Picture 1)
- Advance further by tucking your toes and lifting your knees (Picture 2)
- The final step is to add in the balloon with lifted knees (Picture 3)
- You should not feel pressure down onto your pelvic floor or your back, neck, or glutes working
- Note: Make sure to inhale without pinching the balloon. This comes from being able to rest your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Work on tongue positioning, specifically the resting position of your tongue on the roof of your mouth (just behind your teeth) throughout the day.
- Again, if a balloon is too challenging, you can use a straw to help with the transition.

Reps and sets

Start with doing 2-3 reps of the easiest version of the exercise, maybe a hinge while blowing out with pursed lips to work on managing pressure. I find you can always do more the next day but it's impossible to take back overdoing things, and pressure can cause some serious overdoing consequences.

You can then advance someone to more reps, working up to 10 or more if you're doing pursed lips. If someone is using a balloon, I usually do 6 breaths as the max because I don't want them getting dizzy with the hard breathing.

You can also advance the exercise to a more challenging version. Just take it slow, and remember to ask, "Where are you feeling this?" That will give you the biggest form cue you'll ever need. If they say, "Almost 100% in my neck," then you know you need to make it easier and help them find their abs.

I hope you find this short tutorial helpful. I know your clients will be grateful for your help during their next cold!