

COPD Daily Management Checklist

An evidence-based daily routine for managing COPD symptoms, reducing exacerbations, and maintaining quality of life

Evidence-based · Patient-focused · Updated 2026

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How to use this checklist: Work through each section morning, afternoon, and evening. Tick each item as you complete it. Consistency is the single most important factor in COPD management — small daily actions compound significantly over weeks and months. This checklist is designed to complement, not replace, your prescribed medical treatment. Always follow your respiratory physician's guidance.

■ Morning Routine

- **Check oxygen saturation** — Record your SpO₂ reading with a pulse oximeter before getting out of bed. Target: 88–92% (or as advised by your physician). Note any readings below your baseline.
- **Pursed lip breathing** — 5 minutes before rising. Inhale slowly through your nose for 2 counts, exhale through pursed lips for 4 counts. Reduces air trapping and morning breathlessness.
- **Airway clearance** — Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT): 3–4 cycles of breathing control, thoracic expansion exercises, and huff coughing to clear overnight secretions.
- **Take morning medications** — Long-acting bronchodilator (LABA/LAMA inhaler) and any other prescribed morning medications. Use correct inhaler technique.
- **Morning supplements** — Take NAC 600mg (mucolytic, antioxidant) and Vitamin D3 5000 IU with breakfast. Both have published evidence specifically in COPD populations.
- **Light movement** — 5–10 minutes of gentle movement (walking, chair exercises) to warm up airways and improve circulation before the day begins.
- **Hydration** — Drink a full glass of water. Adequate hydration keeps mucus secretions thin and easier to clear throughout the day.

■ Daytime Checklist

- **Paced activity** — Plan your most demanding activities for when you feel strongest (often mid-morning). Use the "talk test" — if you can't hold a conversation, slow down.
- **Energy conservation** — Sit to perform tasks where possible. Use a wheeled trolley for carrying items. Prioritise activities that matter most and delegate or defer the rest.
- **Breathing during activity** — Breathe out during the effort phase of any physical task (e.g. exhale when standing up, pushing, or lifting). Never hold your breath during exertion.
- **Avoid triggers** — Stay indoors when air quality is poor (check airnow.gov). Avoid smoke, strong perfumes, cleaning chemical fumes, and cold dry air where possible.

- **Inspiratory Muscle Training (IMT)** — 10 minutes daily with a breathing resistance trainer. Evidence shows significant improvement in breathlessness and exercise capacity within 6–8 weeks.
- **Fluid intake** — Aim for 6–8 glasses of water throughout the day. Set hourly reminders if needed. Avoid large amounts of caffeine or alcohol which contribute to dehydration.
- **Nutrition** — Eat 5–6 small meals rather than 3 large ones. High-carbohydrate meals increase CO₂ production — balance with protein and healthy fats. Avoid eating until uncomfortably full.
- **Rest period** — A 20–30 minute rest period mid-afternoon reduces fatigue accumulation and helps sustain energy for the evening.

■ Evening Routine

- **Evening airway clearance** — Repeat ACBT or huff coughing to clear any secretions before bed. This reduces overnight coughing and improves sleep quality.
- **Evening medications** — Take all prescribed evening medications. If using a nebuliser, allow at least 30 minutes before lying down.
- **Position for sleep** — Elevate the head of the bed by 15–20cm or use a wedge pillow. Side sleeping reduces breathlessness and airway obstruction. Avoid lying flat if possible.
- **Bedroom environment** — Check bedroom temperature (cool but not cold — 16–18°C is optimal). Use a humidifier if air is dry. Ensure good ventilation without cold draughts.
- **Anxiety management** — If breathlessness anxiety affects sleep, practise box breathing: inhale 4 counts, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4. Repeat 4 cycles.
- **Record keeping** — Note your peak flow reading, oxygen saturation, activity level, and any symptoms in your COPD diary. Patterns over time help identify deterioration early.

■ Weekly Checks

- **Peak flow measurement** — Measure and record your peak expiratory flow rate. A drop of more than 20% from your personal best is a warning sign to contact your COPD nurse.
- **Weight check** — Weigh yourself at the same time each week. Unexpected weight gain (>2kg in a week) may indicate fluid retention from cor pulmonale — contact your physician.
- **Medication review** — Check inhaler technique is correct. Ensure you have sufficient medication supplies and repeat prescriptions are in order.
- **Exercise review** — Did you achieve your planned exercise sessions this week? Walking, cycling, and swimming are the best evidenced exercises for COPD. Aim for 3–5 sessions weekly.
- **Vaccination check (monthly)** — Annual flu vaccination and 5-yearly pneumococcal vaccination significantly reduce COPD exacerbation risk. Ensure you are up to date.

■ When to Seek Urgent Help

Contact your COPD nurse or GP if:

Go to A&E or call 999/911 if:

- Breathlessness significantly worse than usual
- Increased sputum volume or colour change
- Oxygen saturation below your baseline
- Peak flow drop >20% from personal best
- Increasing ankle swelling
- Reduced exercise tolerance over several days

- Severe breathlessness at rest
- Oxygen saturation below 85%
- Chest pain or palpitations
- Confusion or drowsiness
- Coughing up blood
- Lips or fingertips turning blue

■ Recommended Products for COPD Management

The following products are independently recommended by LungHealthHub.com based on clinical evidence and patient use. Affiliate links are included — we earn a small commission at no extra cost to you.

■ LungExpand Pro — Our #1 Rated Natural Lung Supplement

[Check Price & Availability →](#)

Specifically formulated for COPD patients and former smokers. Targets airway congestion, reduces mucus buildup, and supports breathing capacity. Natural ingredients, 180-day money-back guarantee. The supplement we most recommend for COPD daily management alongside prescribed treatment.

■ Pulmo Balance — Daily Lung Health Maintenance

[Check Price & Availability →](#)

A comprehensive daily lung support formula combining antioxidant and anti-inflammatory natural compounds for ongoing respiratory wellness. Best for daily maintenance support. Complements LungExpand Pro or works well as a standalone daily supplement.

■ NOW Supplements NAC 600mg (Amazon)

[Check on Amazon →](#)

N-Acetyl Cysteine — the most evidence-backed individual supplement for COPD. Reduces exacerbation frequency, thins secretions, and replenishes glutathione. Third-party tested, GMP certified, 22,000+ reviews.

■ Zacurate Pulse Oximeter (Amazon)

[Check on Amazon →](#)

Essential for COPD daily management — monitor your oxygen saturation morning and evening. FDA approved, accurate to ±2%, used by healthcare professionals. Alerts you to drops requiring medical attention.

■ POWERbreathe IMT Device (Amazon)

[Check on Amazon →](#)

Clinically proven inspiratory muscle trainer — the most evidence-backed breathing device for COPD. Strengthens respiratory muscles, reduces breathlessness, and improves exercise capacity. Used in NHS pulmonary rehabilitation.

■ Sports Research Vitamin D3 + K2 5000 IU (Amazon)

[Check on Amazon →](#)

Vitamin D deficiency is extremely common in COPD and independently linked to worse outcomes. 5000 IU D3 with K2 MK-7, third-party tested, 35,000+ reviews. One of the most important micronutrients for COPD management.

■ Microlife Peak Flow Meter (Amazon)

[Check on Amazon →](#)

Track your lung function weekly. A drop of more than 20% from your personal best is an early warning sign of exacerbation. Clinically validated, NHS-recommended, simple to use.

This checklist is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always follow the guidance of your respiratory physician and COPD care team. Some links in this document are affiliate links — LungHealthHub.com earns a small commission at no extra cost to you.