

Breathing Under Load

Body & health

When to breathe, when to brace, and why holding it is not always wrong.

The Valsalva manoeuvre and its safer alternatives.

1

Breathe in before the rep

Into the belly, not the upper chest.

2

Brace the trunk

Tighten as if about to be punched. This stiffens the spine.

3

Hold briefly through the hard part

One rep only. This raises abdominal pressure and supports the spine.

4

Exhale on the way up

Or immediately after the sticking point.

5

Reset between reps

New breath, new brace. Do not hold across several reps.

CAUTION

Raises blood pressure sharply during the hold

Not advised with uncontrolled hypertension or some heart conditions

Ask a clinician if either applies

Educational reference. For light loads, simply exhale on effort and skip the breath hold entirely.