



Second Wind Myth

Are there times during your workout that you struggle to catch your breath waiting for that breathing relief known as a second wind?

This is not a breathing event at all but a sign of a metabolic imbalance in your body. For example, when you first start to jog—especially at a prematurely fast pace—your muscles quickly use the surrounding oxygen stores and accumulate metabolic waste products, mainly carbon dioxide and lactic acid.

The only way to supply your muscles with the oxygen they need and get rid of the metabolites is to increase your heart and breathing rate. This is what causes the out-of-breath sensation. The relief, or “second wind,” is a sign that the oxygen demand from the cells in your muscles has “caught up” or been satisfied. This is also a sign that you are back to your aerobic target heart rate.

Believe it or not, this phenomenon is *not* a sign of great fitness or healthy perseverance. Getting your second wind is a sign that you either started out too fast or you are working yourself too hard in the beginning; so just slow it down a little. It can also be a clue that you are slacking in your exercise program or that you have allowed yourself to get out of shape. Anyone who reaches a healthy level of conditioning and fitness rarely experiences the second wind phenomenon.