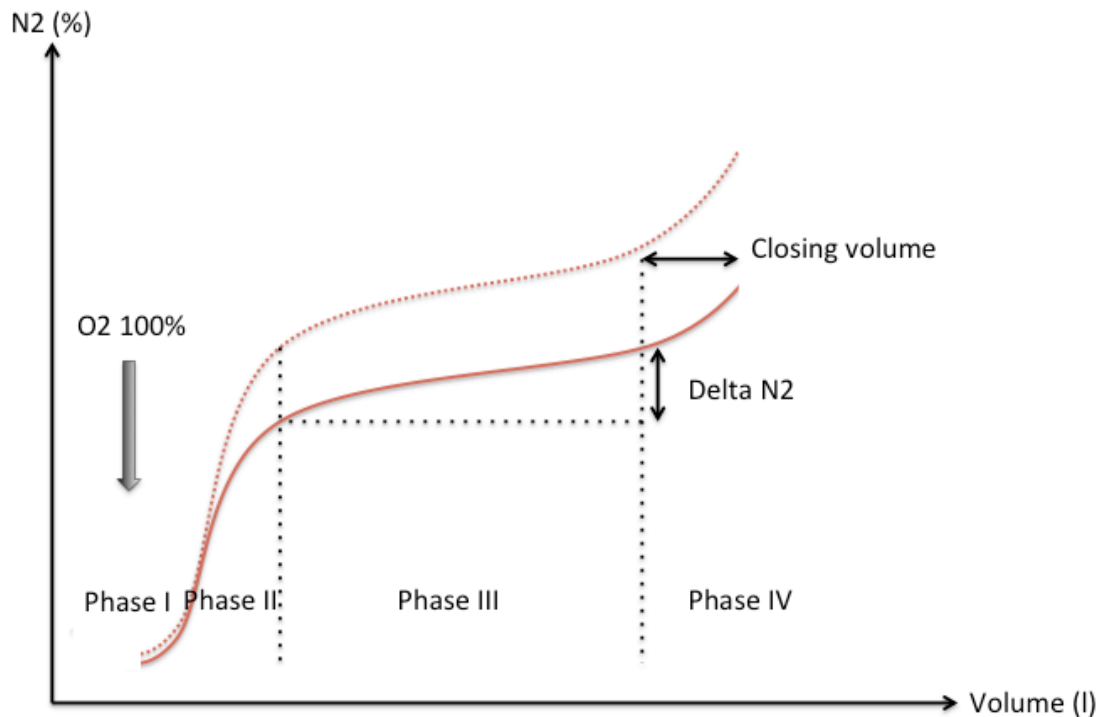


## Schematic representation of single breath nitrogen test



The nitrogen gas (N<sub>2</sub>) concentration is plotted against expired volume following a breath of 100% oxygen. The phase I and II correspond to the dead space and the bronchial phase. The phase III characterizes the alveolar plateau. The last part of the forced expiration (phase IV) is marked by a fast increase in the concentration of expired nitrogen. This change reflects the closing volume (i.e. small airway closure). In this graph, the trace is obtained in a normal subject (solid line) and in a subject with small airway obstruction (dashed line).