

Helpful Hints - 3P's

Pacing - it is important to listen to your body. Slow down or take short rests **before** you become too breathless to help you stay in control and manage your breathlessness.

This can help with everyday tasks such as showering, bed making, hoovering walking E.G. instead of making your bed all at once, do one part then stop and have a rest before doing another part.

Preserve your energy - Aim to use energy saving techniques, such as sitting down when ironing or preparing food.

Plan Ahead - Use a diary or planner to help space activities through your week ahead. Make sure to include some rest time to help manage your breathlessness.

This leaflet was compiled by WLIRT

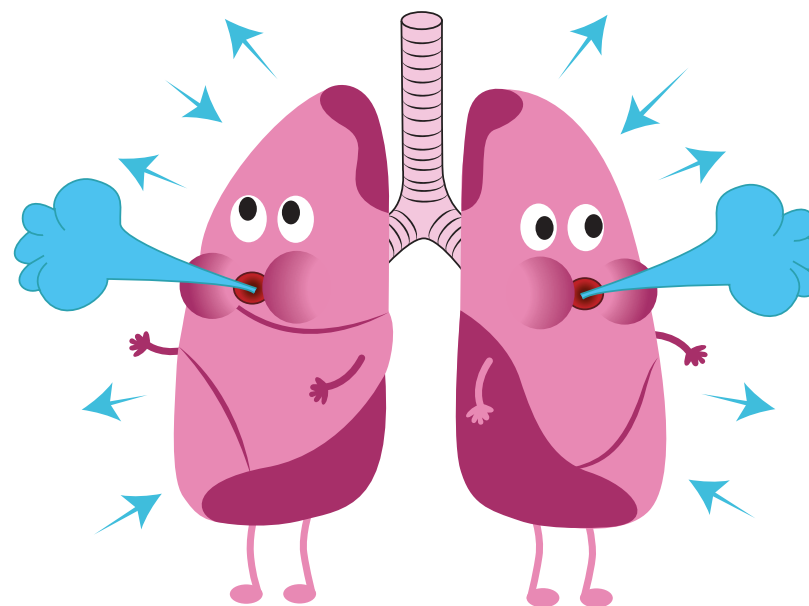
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Integrated Respiratory Team

Coping With Breathlessness



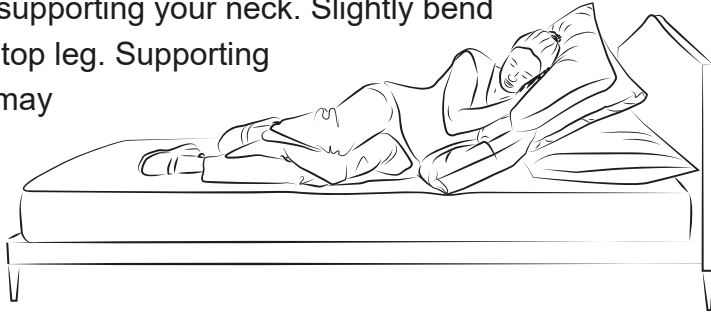
This booklet tells you about some practical suggestions to help you to control your breathing.

This booklet should only be used by specific individuals following physiotherapy assessment. If you have any concerns please approach your Physiotherapist.

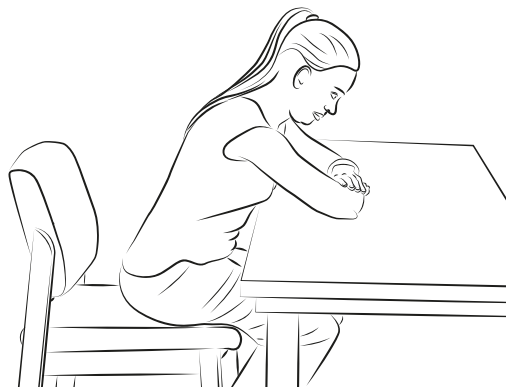
Positions of Ease

You can use the following positions to help ease your breathlessness at rest and after activity

1. **Lie** on your side with pillows under your head and shoulders. Make sure the top pillow is supporting your neck. Slightly bend your knees, hips and top leg. Supporting your arm on a pillow may also help.



2. **Sit** back in a chair, with a small cushion or rolled towel at your back to give you better support. Aim to relax your shoulders and support your arms on your lap or chair sides



3. **Lean** slightly forward with your arms supported on knees or place on a table if you prefer.

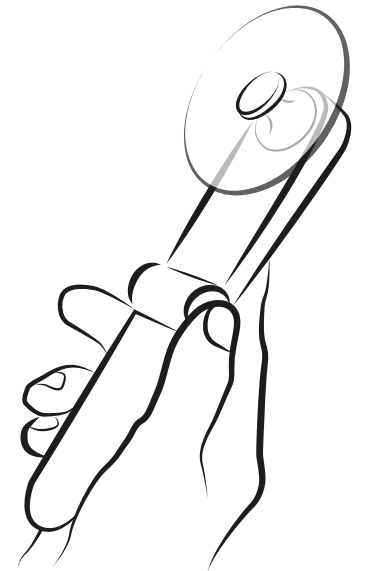
These postures can also be done when standing.

Using a Hand held Fan

Research studies have shown that a cool draft of air from a hand held fan can be very helpful in reducing the feeling of breathlessness.

- When you feel more breathless, get into a comfortable, relaxed position
- Hold the fan approximately 6 inches (15cm) from your face to ensure it is a safe distance from your face to avoid direct contact with the blades
- Aim the draft of air towards the central part of your face so that you can feel it around the sides of your nose and above your top lip.
- You should feel the benefit within a few minutes

- ✓ You can use the fan whenever you'd like to.
- ✓ The fan can help you to stay in control of your breathlessness and help you to recover to your normal breathing more quickly.



Blow-as-you-go

This technique helps makes doing tasks easier. You can use it while you are doing something that makes you breathless and can use it together with 'pursed lips breathing'.

How do I do blow-as-you-go?

Breathe in before you make the effort. **Then breathe out while making the effort.**

For example, when lifting a heavy bag, breathe in before you lift the bag and then breathe out through as you lift the bag - "blow as you go"!

It can be helpful to use pursed lips as you blow. Here are some other examples of when to use 'blow as you go':

- As you reach or bend down
- As you lift a heavy object or weight
- As you step or stand up
- During the most difficult part of any action

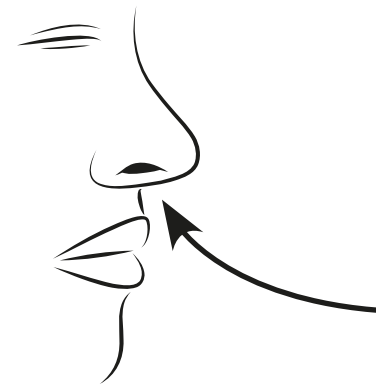
Breathing Control

This is a simple breathing technique that allows you to get more control of your breathing. It help you to breathe with less effort. It can also help you when you are feeling anxious or panicked.

How do I do breathing control?

Get into a comfortable position so that you can relax. Make sure your arms are supported.

- Breathe in slowly and gently through your nose and breathe out through your nose/mouth
- Try to let go of any tension in your body with each breath out - relax your shoulders and soften your stomach. Gradually try to make the breaths slower.
- Closing your eyes may help you to focus on your breathing and relax
- Do not force your breath



Pursed Lip Breathing

This technique can be used at any time to help you control your breathing.

You can also use it while you are doing something that makes you breathless, it will help you to feel less short of breath.

How do I do pursed lip breathing?

Breathe in gently through your nose, then purse your lips as though you were going to blow out a candle or whistle. Blow out with your lips in this pursed position.

Try to gently blow out for as long as is comfortable; do not force your lungs to empty, continue for 3-5 breaths then take a rest for 1 minute and repeat as needed.



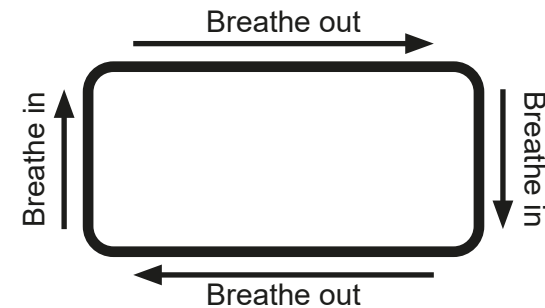
Square Breathing (TV Breathing)

This is a useful, yet simple breathing technique which can help you to regain control of your breathing.

It can be especially helpful if you are feeling anxious or panicked about feeling short of breath.

To do this, firstly look at a square or rectangle shape e.g. your TV, door or window.

Aim to focus on the shape



Begin at a corner and breathe in slowly as you look along the short side of the square, breathe out as you look along the long side. Breathe in again as you look along the next short side and breathe out on the last long side. Aim to slow your breath gradually and regain a regular rhythm.