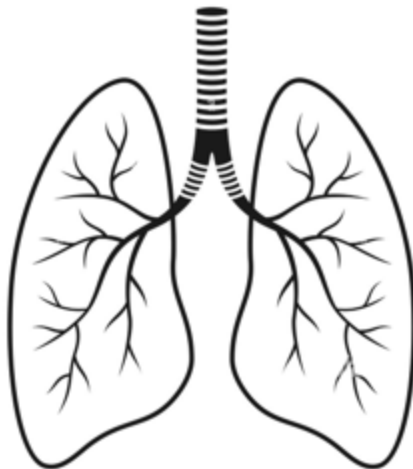


How to Clear Your Lungs

Information for patients



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Why is clearing your lungs important?

Too much mucus in your lungs can make breathing feel difficult. You may experience shortness of breath or cough more frequently.

Clearing the mucus at regular intervals can make breathing feel easier and reduce your risk of infections.

How often should you be clearing your lungs?

Your physiotherapist can guide on how often you should be completing breathing exercises to clear your lungs.

For some people, it is important to clear your lungs every day – even if you're feeling well! This helps to prevent mucus from building up.

If you use nebulisers – either at home or in hospital – you should aim to complete your airway clearance approximately 15 minutes following your nebuliser.



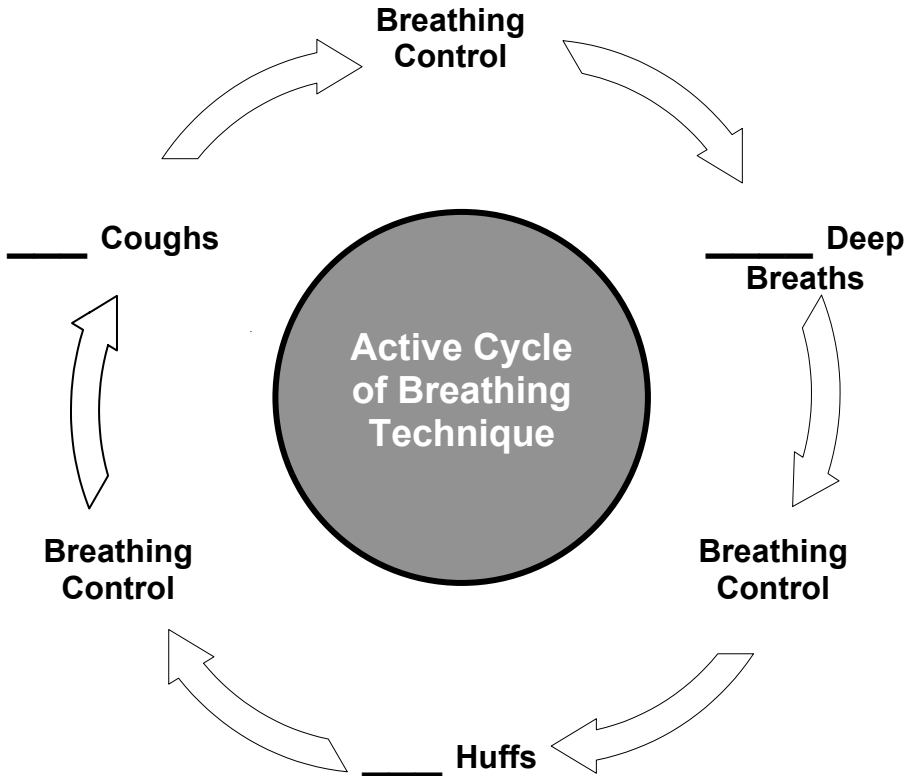
Top tips:

- **Fluid intake:** Staying well hydrated makes the mucus less sticky. Try drinking at regular intervals throughout the day.
- **Exercise:** Regular physical activity can help to move the mucus, take deeper breaths, and increase your exercise tolerance. Try to walk regularly throughout the day.



Active Cycle of Breathing Technique

The Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT) is one way to help you to clear mucus from your chest. ACBT is a set of breathing exercises that loosens and moves the mucus from your airways.



Complete the cycle times.

Repeat this times per day.

If you notice you are becoming more unwell, you can increase how often you complete these exercises

A guide to each step:

1. Breathing Control

Relaxed breathing at your own pace.

2. Deep Breathing

Breathe in slowly and as deeply as you comfortably can. Hold it for 3 seconds before breathing out.

This allows the air sacks at the bottom of your lungs to fully expand.

3. Huffing

Make an “O” shape with your mouth. Breathe out slightly harder, gently squeezing the breath out - like you’re steaming up a mirror.

This helps to move the mucus from lower down in your lungs.

Note: If you start to sound wheezy, stop and use puffer if appropriate.

4. Coughing

Try having a cough at the end of each cycle. This helps to move the mucus from your lungs.

Contenance and coughing

Individuals who cough regularly sometimes experience problems related to urinary incontinence. If this is something that affects you, please discuss it with your physiotherapist so we can provide further guidance on pelvic floor exercises or refer you to a specialist physiotherapist.



Alternatively, you can access advice and videos on women's and men's pelvic health by visiting the websites or scanning the QR codes below:

Advice for women:

www.thepogp.co.uk/patient_information/womens_health/bladder_bowel_incontinence.aspx



Advice for men:

www.thepogp.co.uk/patient_information/mens_health/bladder_dysfunction.aspx



Pelvic floor exercises:

www.thepogp.co.uk/patients/pelvic_health_advice/pelvic_floor_muscles.aspx



Other useful links

Bronchiectasis Scotland – a guide to managing and living with Bronchiectasis:

www.bronchiectasis.scot.nhs.uk



NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde – YouTube video guide to ACBT:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpzJmjtir08



Feedback

We would love to hear your feedback to ensure we continue to improve the services we offer. Please consider leaving a comment on our care opinion link by visiting the website or scanning the QR code below.

www.careopinion.org.uk/549/respiratory-physio-opd5



