

Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT)

NHS Lothian Major Trauma Service

Rib Fractures – Patient Information Leaflet

BREATHING CONTROL:

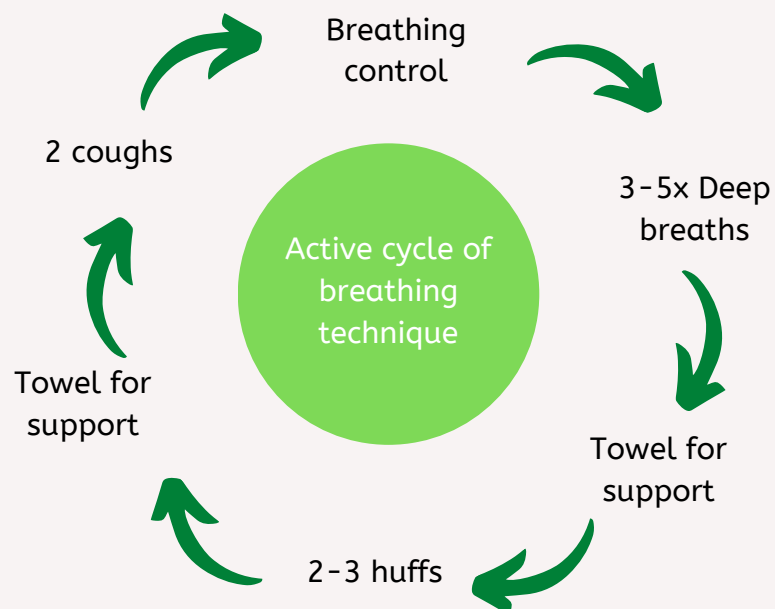
Normal, relaxed breathing at your own pace.

DEEP BREATHING: Breathe in slowly and as deeply as you comfortably can for 3-5 breaths. Hold each breath in for 2-3 seconds.

For huff and cough use a towel over your wound site

HUFFING: To do this, make an “O” shape with your mouth and breathe out (Like steaming up a mirror or cleaning glasses!). Huffing helps move the phlegm. Try this 2 times.

COUGHING: Try coughing 2 times to bring phlegm up.



Please repeat this cycle hourly during the day.



What to expect

- Healing takes approx. 6 weeks
- Most people can recover at home with broken ribs
- Having a nerve block into your spine is common. This is known as an Erector Spinae Plane Block and provides strong pain relief.

Pain relief

Rib fractures are very painful. Insufficient pain relief could negatively impact breathing, coughing, secretion clearance and increases the risk of pulmonary infection.

Breathing Exercises

Your physiotherapist will encourage you to cough **as soon as you can**.

Coughing is important with rib fractures to make sure that you are able to **clear any build-up of secretions in your lungs**.

Simply place a towel or pillow over the affected ribs and gently squeeze/cuddle it into your ribs. This provides an element of protection and support for your ribs.

Instructions for breathing exercises to help keep your lungs clear are detailed on the back of this leaflet.

Incentive Spirometer

Incentive spirometry is a lung expansion therapy.

Instructions:

1. Wrap your mouth tightly around the mouthpiece
2. Make sure you take a deep breath in through your mouthpiece
3. As you breathe in, you should see the yellow ball start to rise.
4. The disc will rise to a number printed on the cylinder; this number is the volume of oxygen you are able to inhale during one inspiration.

Mobilising

It is important to maintain mobility when healing from rib fractures.

Mobilising as early as possible will **prevent chest infections, aid in secretion clearance, improve oxygenation and allow you to become independent again**. Ensure you are frequently moving your shoulder through range on the side of your rib fractures.

If you have any questions please ask your ward physiotherapist.

Upper Body Exercises

You will be provided with an additional sheet of upper body exercises which will be demonstrated when appropriate.