

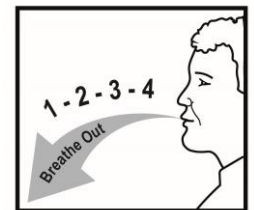
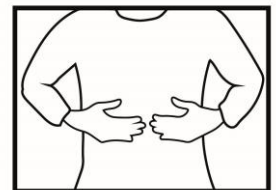
Advice to help with the management of your breathlessness

You have been given this leaflet to help you manage your breathlessness. Often breathlessness can cause you to breathe with your upper chest and shoulders in a fast (rapid) and shallow manner. This type of breathing uses a lot of energy and can cause you to become very tired.

Controlled Breathing

By controlling your breathing, you can create a more relaxed and gentle breathing pattern. To do this you will need to relax your upper chest and shoulders and breathe at a normal rate using the lower chest. Try to do these exercises between 5 to 10 times a day. Do not try and do Controlled Breathing when feeling severely breathless after exertion.

- Find a quiet place. Sit in a comfortable position with your back supported.
- Relax your shoulders by resting your hands on your thighs.
- Place one of your hands on your abdomen (tummy) and give a little cough. The muscle you feel under your hands is your diaphragm. Let your diaphragm do most of the work of your breathing.
- Try breathing in through your nose and out gently through your mouth making your breath out twice as long as your breath in.
- To help you control your breath, count 1 as you breathe in then 2 and 3 as you breathe out.
- As you breathe in, push your hand out with your diaphragm and abdominal muscles. As you do this you will feel your waist expanding.
- Relax your stomach as you breathe out.



REMEMBER- 3Rs

RISE: Stomach rises as you breathe in.

RELAX: Relax the stomach as you breathe out.

REST: Don't rush into the next breath, wait for it to come.

Progressive Muscular Relaxation (PMR):

Work up to doing this exercise four times a day, to improve stress levels and to increase muscle memory for your breathing muscles.

Sit in a comfortable position, with eyes closed if you wish. Keep your shoulders down. Take four or five slow gentle relaxed Controlled Breaths, expanding your belly as you breathe air in and contracting it as you exhale.

For each muscle group, tense for up to 10 seconds and release. Take a few deep breaths as you notice the sensation that comes as those muscles relax, before moving on to the next muscle group. Skip areas that cause pain when tensing. Repeat taking or five controlled breaths after tensing each area. Ensure your shoulders are down away from your ears.

- 1. Head / face** - Begin at the top of your body and go down. Start with your head, tensing your facial muscles, squeezing your eyes shut, puckering your mouth and clenching your jaw. Hold, then release and breathe.
- 2. Shoulders** - Tense as you lift your shoulders to your ears, hold, then release and breathe.
- 3. Arms** - Make a fist with your right hand; tighten the muscles in your lower and upper arm, hold, and then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with the left hand.
- 4. Back** - Concentrate on your back, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Hold, then release. Breathe in and out.
- 5. Stomach** - Suck in your stomach, hold, and then release. Breathe in and out.
- 6. Buttocks** - Clench your buttocks, hold, and then release. Breathe in and out.
- 7. Upper Legs** - Tense your thighs by squeezing your knees together
- 8. Lower Legs** - Flex your right calf, hold, and then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with left calf.
- 9. Toes** - Tighten toes on your right foot, hold, then release. Breathe in and out. Repeat with left foot.

MANAGING BREATHLESSNESS

If you are breathless, you may find the following positions helpful:



What to do when you get short of breath:

- Remember, it is completely normal to get breathless on exertion.
- Remind yourself that it **will** settle when you rest and it's good to be active, because this will build up your breathing muscles and help breathless to settle quicker when you rest.
- Plan ahead, leaving enough time so you can pace yourself. Prioritise your tasks. How can you make the task easier. What if things do not go well?
- Have things to sit on, to boost your confidence by knowing you can sit down when needed.
- Consider using a four wheeled walker or other walking aids.
- STOP before you get too breathless. Make yourself moderately breathless in a controlled way.
- Consider the factors that impact on your energy levels. Think of your energy levels as a book of energy tokens and try to spread out spending them over the whole day. Try and save some energy tokens in your book at the end of the day.
- Try to avoid rushing.
- Try not to hold your breath during activities.
- Use 'Blow as you go' – pursed lip breathing (see below)
- Have a fan ready to use for face cooling.

***'Blow as you go' - Pursed lip breathing**

Breathe in gently through your nose if you can. Slightly narrow your lips as though you were going to blow out a candle or whistle then breathe out with your lips in this pursed position.

When active, just focus on breathing as if you are blowing a table tennis ball along a table.
If very breathless, do not focus on your in-breath, as this may exacerbate feelings of panic.

When resting, keep your shoulders down and gradually slow your breathing till you can think of blowing a feather across a table.

Recovery Breathing:

Think about these strategies when resting & waiting for your breathing to settle:

- Sit leaning forward



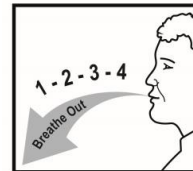
or fix your shoulder still in another position.

- Use a hand held fan



A handheld fan (ideally with 3 blades) directed at the central part of your face at an approximate distance of 15cm / 6 inches can help reduce the feeling of breathlessness by cooling the area around your face. It is an inexpensive option without side-effects and can work within a few minutes.

- Focus on the breath out (don't worry about the breath in, it will take care of itself).



- When you feel able, begin to blow out for longer.
- Gradually relax your shoulders and upper chest.
- Bring breathing back to your tummy.
- Stay still for a minute after you have got your breath back before moving.

Grounding

When at rest, If you feel panic rising, try to keep shoulders down and focus hard on the following things to distract your mind from your breathing:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can touch
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Visualization

If you feel panic rising or your breathlessness is not settling, try to keep shoulders down, use a fan and then think of a fond memory or an image special to you. Focus really tightly on what you would have seen, heard, smelled, felt and tasted; imagine you are there again. For example, you could use an image in your mind's eye of a river scene (see next page)

If bad thoughts come into your mind, place them on a leaf on the river and watch as the leaf floats gently away and out of sight...

Hopefully, after distracting your mind with all the senses involved in the image, you should find your breathing has settled quicker whilst you are resting after exertion.



Preparing for a panic attack or increase in breathlessness

We know that breathlessness is an extremely frightening, unpleasant sensation and it can vary from day to day.

If you can overcome or reduce the natural anxiety and fear associated with breathlessness and keep active, even though you are feeling breathless, you will not be hurting or damaging your body; in fact you will be improving your health.

THINK

- I have had this feeling before - I know it will go away. It will settle, it always does settle.
- I am going to get into a position that I know helps me recover from feeling breathlessness.
- I am going to use my fan and concentrate on breathing out.
There is nothing to be frightened of – I really am ok.
- I can do this.
- I am doing it now.