

Coping with Breathlessness

Therapy Services

This booklet is designed to help people with long term chest conditions such as COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), Bronchiectasis, Pulmonary Fibrosis, or any other condition where breathlessness is a major symptom.

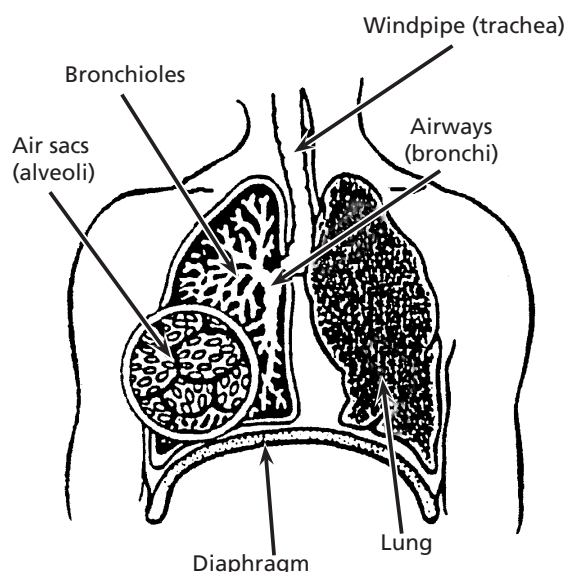
It is hoped that the techniques in this booklet will assist people with chest conditions to control their breathlessness more successfully.

These techniques should be taught to you by a member of the physiotherapy team.

How do we breathe?

The lungs are positioned and protected within the rib cage. There are muscles between the ribs and below the lungs is a dome shaped muscle called the diaphragm. These muscles are essential for breathing.

As you take a breath in, the muscles move the rib cage upwards and outwards and the diaphragm pulls downwards to flatten out. The lungs then expand to fill the space that is created and this pulls air into them.



The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

How can I control the amount of breathlessness I feel?

This booklet will give you information about:-

1. Positions of ease
2. Breathing control

What is a position of ease?

Positions of ease are positions you can adopt which will help you feel less breathless. They help you to relax the upper part of the chest and allow the diaphragm to work more efficiently. If the diaphragm can work more efficiently then you will be able to get air in and out of your lungs better and this will help you feel less breathless.

Fig1.

High side lying. Lie on your side with a pillow in front to rest your arm on. Bend your knees and bring the top leg further forward than the bottom one. This ensures you are correctly lying on your side.

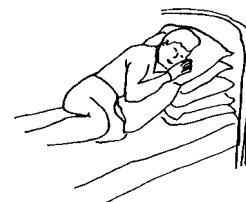


Fig2.

With your back straight lean forward over a table, using pillows or cushions to support your upper chest and head.



Fig3.

Sit leaning forward, with a straight back, resting your arms on your thighs.



Fig4.

Standing, bend forward with a straight back and rest your forearms against a window sill, or bannister of a suitable height.



Fig5.

Stand with your back against a wall, with your feet slightly apart and your arms at your side, with your shoulders relaxed.



How should I use the Positions of Ease?

Experiment with a few of the positions to find out which suits you best.

Adopt this position whenever an episode of breathlessness occurs.

Also try to use breathing control to regain control of your breathing.

What is breathing control?

Breathing control is a pattern of breathing that attempts to use the diaphragm while allowing the shoulders and upper chest to be relaxed. This is more efficient and reduces the effort required to breathe.

How do I use breathing control?

Practice this technique at times when you are not so breathless so you know what to do when you become breathless.

1. Find a comfortable position e.g. a position of ease
2. Breathe out gently through either your nose or mouth while relaxing your shoulders
3. Breathe in, preferably through your nose, and feel the air expanding your lower ribs and raising your abdomen.

(It may help you to rest one hand on your abdomen or both hands on your lower ribs).

When you feel more breathless, breathe at a rate that feels comfortable but gently relax your shoulders. As you regain control your rate will naturally slow down.

Useful Contacts:

Physiotherapy department

New Cross Hospital

Wolverhampton

01902 695597

Ask to speak to a member of the Respiratory Team.

British Lung Foundation Helpline

03000 030 555

Asthma UK Helpline

0300 222 5800

Wolverhampton Stop Smoking Service (West Park Hospital)

0800 073 4242 or 01902 443083

Useful Website:

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk/conditions

Author – Respiratory Physiotherapy Team.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。