

## Breathlessness Management

### What causes breathlessness?

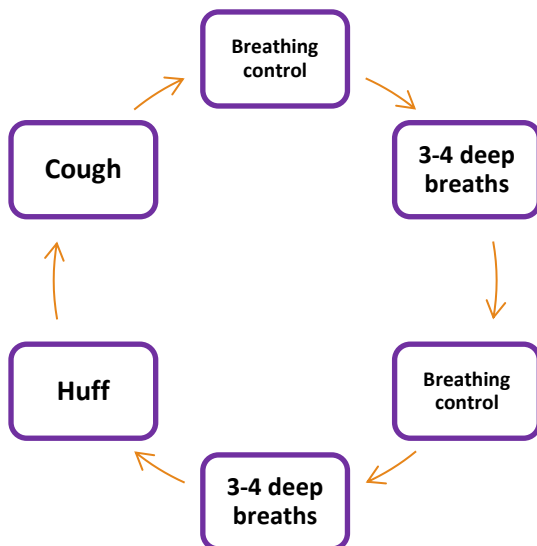
- Breathlessness is a natural response when your body needs more oxygen and energy whilst doing something that requires physical effort.
- E.g. If you are walking upstairs or carrying shopping, your lungs need more oxygen.
- Breathing exercises are used to help you control your breathlessness.



**Top tip:** It is important to practice these exercises often so you learn them; it is easier to practice when you are not short of breath.



### Active cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT)

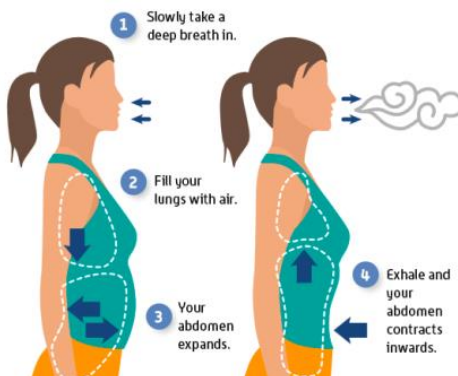


#### Tips

- Hold each deep breath for 2-3 seconds
- Huff (Like you are steaming up a mirror)
- Start with a short huff and then a long huff
- Try to do this every morning or when you need to clear your chest
- May be easier after using reliever (blue) inhaler

### Breathing Control

- When breathless, you may find that you are using the muscles in your neck, shoulders, and back to help you breathe. This uses more energy and can be tiring.
- Using your main breathing muscle (diaphragm) will help to prevent this.



1. Put one hand on your chest, and one on your stomach.
2. Slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
3. When you breathe in, the hand on your stomach should move more than the one on your chest.

### Pursed lips breathing

- Breathe out with your lips pursed, as if you're whistling.
- This slows your breathing down and helps to make your breathing more efficient.
- Ideal to use to help recover your breathing following exertion.

### Blow As You Go

Breathe out when you're making a big effort, for example:

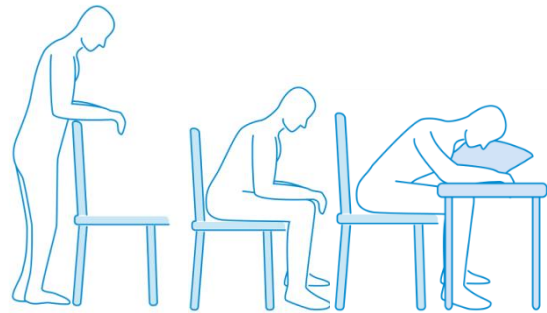
- ★ Stretching your arms above your head
- ★ Bending down
- ★ Going up a step or stairs
- ★ Standing up

★ **OR** during the hardest part of any action **BLOW as you GO** ★

**Don't hold your  
breath!!**

### Positions of Ease

- Use these positions to assist in relieving breathlessness.
- If you cannot sit down, try to find something to lean against or rest on e.g. kitchen surface or supermarket trolley.



### REMEMBER... if you are unwell:

- You may need to use your blue (reliever) inhaler more often.
- Allow yourself more time for day to day activities (dressing/washing).
- You may need more time to clear your chest in the morning.
- Use your breathing techniques (ACBT) throughout the day.
- Your body will need more rest to recover from an exacerbation.
- You may benefit from a few extra pillows at night during an exacerbation.

Contact your GP/Respiratory nurse if you are taking antibiotics and/or steroids and not improving.

**For Further information visit: [www.thebreatheprogramme.co.uk](http://www.thebreatheprogramme.co.uk)**