

A 10-point plan to help you cope with breathlessness

1. Position yourself comfortably.
2. Have cool air on your face – use a fan or open the window.
3. Take sips of cold water or sharp fruit drinks – these may make your throat feel clearer.
4. Practice relaxed breathing control (see Strategies 1 and 2)
5. Listen to music you find relaxing or a relaxation tape or watch TV.
6. Wear loose clothing.
7. Relaxing massage for the neck and shoulders can be helpful, possibly using an appropriate aromatherapy oil.
8. Use the calming hand (see leaflet Managing Breathlessness) or whatever else helps when you start to feel anxious or panicky.
9. When walking on the flat, breathe out for two steps and in for one step, or out for four and in for two, depending on the most suitable rate for you. When walking on slopes or up stairs remember not to hold your breath. Try to breathe rhythmically in time with your steps.

Space for your own notes

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Breathing Control

Strategies to help you control your breathing

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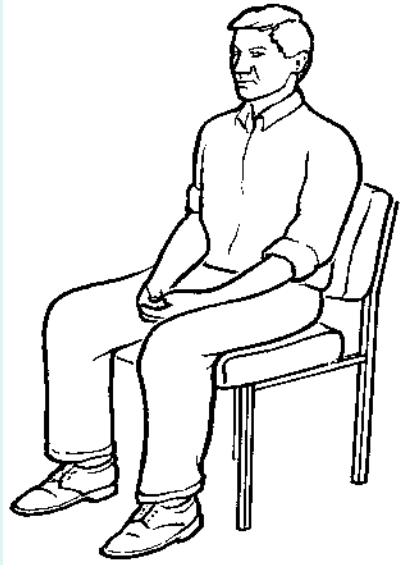
The purpose of this leaflet is to introduce strategies to help put you back in control of your breathing.

Introduction

The strategies do not involve you taking deeper breaths but aim to reduce the effort of breathing.

You will find that the more relaxed you are, the more effective your breathing control will be. Relaxation can take time, but you will achieve it with practice.

By mastering the first strategy you will become more aware of your breathing. Then you can move on to strategy 2 which will help you further.



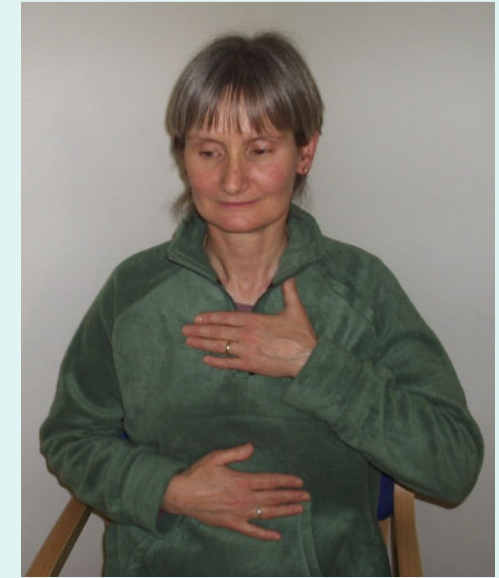
Strategy 1 Breathing awareness

Ensure that you are in a comfortable, well-supported position such as sitting or lying. Try to ensure a quiet environment without interruptions.

- Once sitting comfortably, SIGH OUT as you relax your shoulders and arms. Continue to breathe normally, and when you are ready:
- Place one hand lightly on your upper chest.
- Place your other hand on your abdomen just below where your ribs divide.
- Keeping your shoulders and upper chest relaxed, take a normal breath in and feel the hand on your abdomen rise up and out.
- Breathe out and feel the hand on your abdomen sink down and in. Your upper hand should barely move. When you feel this happening you are in more control and breathing more effectively.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth at a rate that is comfortable for you.

Practice this strategy for approximately five minutes two or three times a day, at a time when you feel able to relax.

Once you feel you have mastered this first strategy you can proceed to Strategy 2.



Strategy 2 Breathing control

This strategy will help you to sustain breathing control at rest, maintain control during activity (such as walking or climbing the stairs) and regain control during episodes of breathlessness.

- Start with Strategy 1.
- Begin to focus on your **out** breath.
- Try to make your **out** breath last twice as long as your **in** breath (it may help to count – e.g. **in** for one, **out** for two, or **in** for two and **out** for four ...)

Practice until you feel comfortable with this breathing pattern.

You are now able to slow and regulate your breathing. You are more in control.