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The Royal Liverpool  
and Broadgreen  
University Hospitals  
NHS Trust

## Patient information

# Chest Clearance Exercises and Postural Drainage

## Therapies Speciality

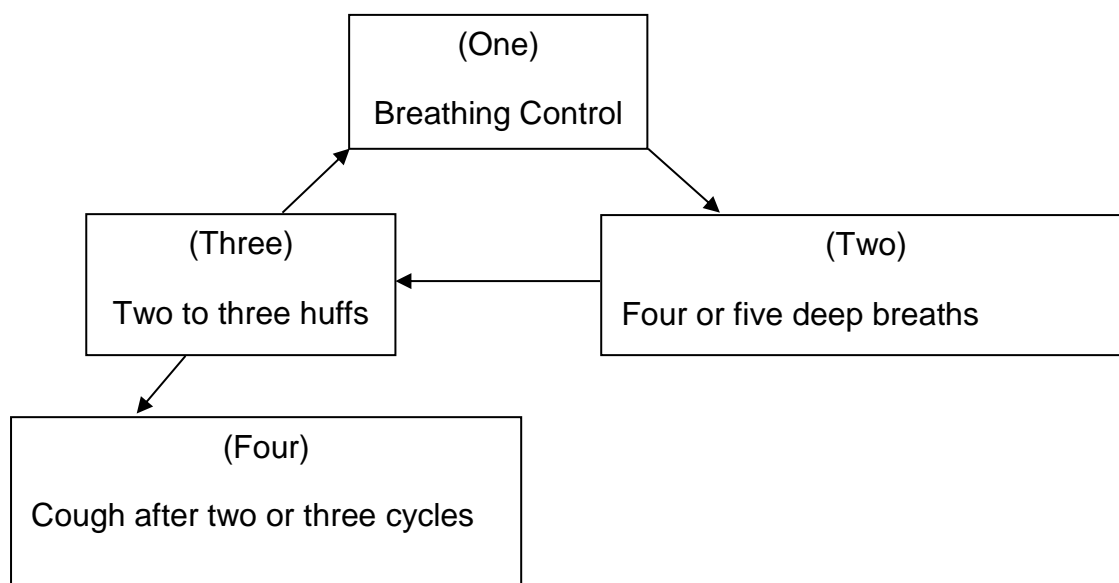
You have been referred to chest (Respiratory) physiotherapy to help with removal of phlegm (sputum) from your chest.

The following series of exercises should be done four times a day to make sure you keep your lungs as clear of secretions as possible.

**Do not do these exercises immediately after eating.**

### Sputum Clearance Exercises

The active cycle of breathing technique



**Try to cough two or three times only to clear the phlegm when you feel it is at the back of your throat.**

### Breathing control

This should be done in position(s) as advised by your Physiotherapist.

- Place a hand on your stomach, just above your navel (belly button).
- Breathe in gently through your nose allowing your stomach to expand.
- Relax and breathe out through your nose, without forcing the air out.
- Breathe in for a count of three and breathe out for a count of four.

## **Deep Breaths**

These exercises expand the lungs allowing air to get behind the phlegm.

- Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose.
- Hold the breath in for a count of three.
- Relax and allow the air to fall out of your lungs through your nose.
- Repeat four or five times.

## **Huffing**

This action is similar to steaming up a mirror with your mouth. It has a similar effect as coughing although it is less tiring.

- Take a medium sized breath in, then, with your mouth open, force the air out, hard and fast.

## **Cough**

Excessive coughing can be very tiring. It can reduce your intake of oxygen and make your chest feel tight.

## **Postural Drainage**

Your doctor and physiotherapist will be able to diagnose the specific part of your lungs where there is a problem. Postural drainage involves you lying in different positions in order to help drain the sputum from these problem areas.

Try to lie in the instructed position for at least twenty minutes twice a day. During this time you should do your breathing exercises (ACBT).

## **Warning Signs**

Sometimes you will be able to notice when you are getting a chest infection. If this happens you need to go to the doctors to get some antibiotics or appropriate treatment as soon as possible.

The earlier you go, the sooner you can get treatment.

### **Some warning signs include:**

- Change in colour of sputum, it usually turns green when you have a chest infection.
- Coughing up more sputum than normal.
- If you feel more short of breath than normal.
- Feeling unwell.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further information

**If you have any queries please speak to your therapist or contact:**

**Therapies department**

**Tel: 0151 706 2760**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2760**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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