

Patient information

Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT)

Respiratory Physiotherapy Therapies – Aintree Hospital

This leaflet aims to teach you how to perform the Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT). This is a technique that helps you to clear mucus from your chest.

Maintaining a clear chest can;

- Help reduce repeated infections.
- Enable you to breathe more freely, especially during exercise and everyday activities.
- Help reduce excessive coughing to clear secretions throughout the day.

This leaflet is designed to support the advice and exercise given to you by your physiotherapist.

Your physiotherapist will talk you through the technique and answer any questions you may have.

ACBT is a way of clearing secretions that you may find useful, and is much less tiring than lots of coughing. It consists of three different stages.

Breathing Control or Relaxed Breathing

This is designed to relax you and help you recover from more strenuous parts of the cycle. To do this, keep your shoulders and tummy as relaxed as possible.

Your breathing should sound quiet. Breathe in and out at a comfortable rate, allowing your tummy to rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.

Repeat this stage until your breathing feels settled and comfortable.

Thoracic Expansion Exercises or Deep Breathing

This helps to loosen the secretions from your chest wall.

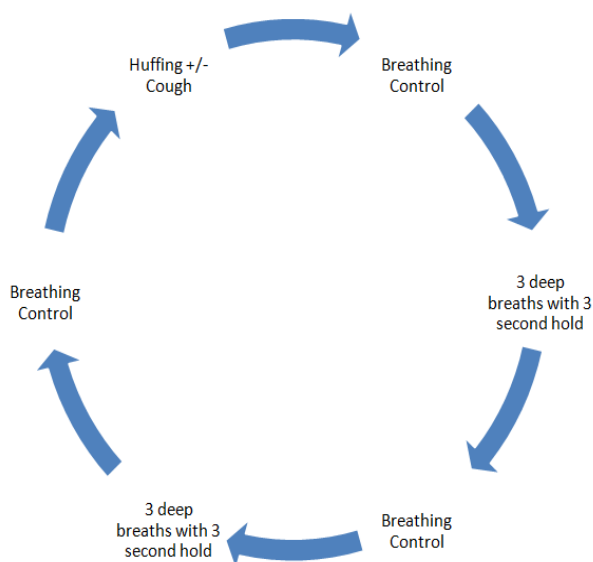
- Take a long, slow, deep breath in through your nose and hold for a few seconds.
- As you breathe out through your mouth relax and let the air flow out.
- Repeat three times.

Forced Expiration Technique or Huffs

This is a controlled way of removing mucus where you push the air from your lungs out through an open mouth.

- Take a small breath in and breathe out as quickly as you can through an open mouth as if you were trying to steam up a mirror.
- Repeat this two or three times then return to breathing control to prevent yourself getting too tired or your chest becoming tight.
- You may need to cough after the huff to clear mucus, but try to avoid excess coughing as this could cause your chest to feel tight.

Repeat the cycle of breathing as demonstrated in the diagram until you feel you have cleared your chest of mucus, or stop and rest if you feel too tired.



Points to Remember

- Make sure you drink plenty of water as dehydration causes mucus to become thick and sticky, which makes it harder to clear.
- If using a bronchodilator inhaler/nebuliser, take this before clearing your chest (this tends to be your blue/green inhaler, if you are unsure ask your pharmacist).
- Do not do your airway clearance straight after a meal, as this may make you feel sick.
- Always allow yourself plenty of time to complete your routine.
- You may need to clear your chest for shorter periods more often when you are unwell.
- If you use a steroid inhaler/nebuliser it is best to take this after clearing your chest (this tends to be your purple/brown inhaler, if unsure ask your pharmacist).

Special Instructions

Your physiotherapist may have individual advice for you or additional techniques for you to try. They will write them here if appropriate.

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

For further help/information contact

If you have any further questions or concerns that this leaflet has not been able to answer please contact your ward physiotherapist.

Respiratory physiotherapy office

Tel: 0151 529 3910

(Monday to Friday 8.30-16.30)

Other sources of information

- British Lung Foundation www.lunguk.org.
- British Thoracic Society www.brit-thoracic.org.uk.
- Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Respiratory Care.
www.acprc.org.uk

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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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